

COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS. **ILLUSTRATED.**

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LADY FINGALL.

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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
<i>Our Frontispiece: Lady Fingail</i>	577, 584
<i>Leaders of Country Life</i>	578
<i>Country Notes</i>	579
<i>Wild Ducks' Nests. (Illustrated)</i>	581
<i>Shooting Gossip</i>	581
<i>Notes for the Table: Spring Table Decoration</i>	582
<i>Famous Oaks. (Illustrated)</i>	583
<i>What the Tiger Did</i>	583
<i>Photographic Competition</i>	583
<i>Literary Notes</i>	583
<i>Yachting: Fitting-out. (Illustrated)</i>	584
<i>Kennel Notes: Profitable Dog-keeping</i>	586
<i>Some Ancient Refectories. (Illustrated)</i>	587
<i>Fishers All. (Illustrated)</i>	590
<i>Gardens Old and New: Tortworth Court. (Illustrated)</i>	592
<i>Books of the Day</i>	596
<i>Chonicles of a Rookery.—II. (Illustrated)</i>	597
<i>Draught Oxen. (Illustrated)</i>	599
<i>In the Garden. (Illustrated)</i>	601
<i>The Caves of Engedi; being a Sequel to Our Siege of Jotapata</i>	602
<i>Cycling Notes</i>	604
<i>In Town: "Change Alley"</i>	604
<i>Dramatic Notes</i>	605
<i>Racing Notes (Illustrated)</i>	605
<i>Correspondence</i>	607
<i>On the Green</i>	608

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LEADERS OF . . . COUNTRY LIFE.

THOUGH the Press and the public paid a fitting tribute of regret to the death of the Duke of Beaufort, we doubt whether the part filled by the natural leaders of country life, who by birth and training represent the tastes and habits most dear to the English character, is at present adequately recognised. This is partly because there is usually no break in the order of succession, and no sudden check to the advantages which flow from such centres of social and territorial influence as Badminton, or Eaton Hall, or Trentham, or Welbeck, or the hundreds of other stars of the first, second, or third magnitude in the constellation of great country houses. The eldest sons early learn the tradition and management of these centres of social influence. "To an Amurath an Amurath succeeds," and the tendency of public opinion is to look upon the place, rather than the proprietor, as the real motive force, and to take whatever benefit accrues to all and sundry as a kind of natural amenity, inherent not in the person but in the property.

Those who know the facts must often smile when they hear this impersonal view maintained. The whole impulse and direction comes in nearly every case from the master hand. Yet it is not uncommon to hear those who do not know speaking as if all the benefits of a great country house would accrue to the neighbourhood undiminished if the property were in the control of a department or of trustees, like the management of the New Forest or of the British Museum.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The personal faction is, absolutely dominant in the influence of these rural palaces, and if the proprietor is so fortunate as to have the counsel and aid of a consort worthy of him and his position, the cause and effect are still more marked. Matthew Arnold, in one of his most amusing criticisms of social life in the sixties, announced that he had discovered the function of the great landed proprietors. Their mission is "to teach our Philistines how to live fast." It seems incredible that, even in jest, so clever a man as Matthew Arnold could have made such a mistake. The influence of the hereditary leaders of country life has been thrown entirely into the other scale. They have taught by example not how to live "fast," but how to live well, by getting the utmost enjoyment out of the best objects of pleasure, and at the same time by passing on a great deal of happiness, directly and indirectly, to their neighbours of all classes.

We take it that the typical nobles who do live fast, and who make no secret of their view that that is the only kind of life worth living, are the territorial magnates of Russia, of parts of Austria, and, to a less degree, the most wealthy classes of French Society. They have every right to do so, if that is the kind of thing they like. But note how utterly different their life and ideas are from those of our own landed aristocracy, whether nobles or commoners. The income of the Russian or Austrian noble is in nineteen cases out of twenty derived from land—land which he never goes near, and on which he has a palace or two which he never sleeps in. At most he goes to his shooting-box for a few days' deer shooting, or hare and partridge driving. Towns, and the pleasures of town life, with such excitements as racing, pigeon shooting, and cards, are the objects of those of the continental nobles who like to live fast. These form a very large proportion, though by no means the majority.

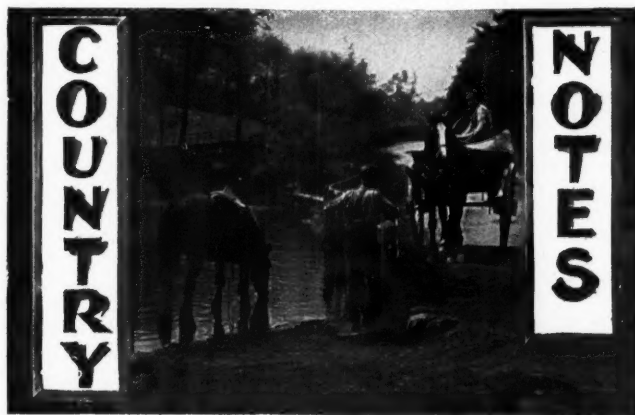
It would be difficult to find a stronger contrast to this way of life than that of the vast majority of the same class in this country. It is not too much to say that nineteen out of twenty spend the greater part of their revenues not in town, but in the country, and if, unfortunately, a choice has to be made between the maintenance of a London house and the country home, in nearly every case the preference is given to the latter.

It is difficult to overrate the encouragement given to residents in all parts of England during the long days of agricultural depression by the steady support which the historic families of this country, those who united political power with territorial possessions, gave to the impoverished rural districts by refusing to close the great houses. Wherever possible they did the opposite, and, while cutting down outside expenditure elsewhere, lived more constantly in the country and for longer periods, saw more of their neighbours, and extended a cordial and helpful interest to all and sundry. This moral support came at a time when it was immensely serviceable. In hundreds of instances the funds needed for maintaining the establishments were derived from town property, while the landed estate was kept going at an absolute loss. What would have happened if the owners had concluded that because the country property did not pay, it might be let slide and the number of persons concerned in its upkeep left to shift for themselves? Discouragement, poverty, and general demoralisation would certainly have followed in hundreds of instances where, by the personal presence and support of the proprietor, the whole neighbourhood has been able, with losses, but not with discredit, to weather the storm.

Now that rural matters are in a more settled and hopeful condition, the advantages conferred on the counties in general by the consolidation of wealth and resources in the hands which know so well how to use them, are in no way diminished. We say this without special reference to the social side of country life. That it gains in brilliancy by the presence of the leaders of the leisured class and of those concerned in great affairs, goes without saying. It is of immense advantage to any rural neighbourhood to have access even to one or two of those who are concerned in "running the national machine," and to some extent makes up for their distance from the active life of London. But there is hardly any branch of practical activity in country life to which the great houses do not give direct aid, by the mere fact that these things are done there as well as it is possible to do them. It is a kind of rural object-lesson to the country-side; and in spite of Disraeli's gentle chaff about the county magnate—the late Duke of Northumberland, we believe—who was "always afraid of under-building his position," it is rare to find a case in which things are not done in a form as practical as it is complete.

Who were the pioneers of scientific agriculture? The great proprietors always, from Mr. Cope of Holkham downwards. Who developed and gave facilities for the immense national asset of pedigree cattle and sheep? The same class, from the Duke of Bedford downwards. Gardening under glass, in its best form, was practically created by Paxton when in the service of the Duke of Devonshire. The whole art and mystery of horse-

breeding and stable management owes its chief developments to the same source. Practical forestry in England only exists at the present moment on the great estates. Capital expended with judgment, and at the same time never allowed to undermine the sense of self-help among those on the estates, has been sunk for the last three generations on these properties to an amount which would scarcely be credited by those who have not contrasted their condition with that of the districts where no such fund has been available. How little the return has been, anyone who has read, or who will read, the Duke of Bedford's work on "The History of a Great Estate" can learn for himself. To sum up the practical activities of our great resident land-owners at the present moment would be beyond the space of our whole number, while the addition to the amenities of country residents by the maintenance of picture galleries, packs of hounds, gardens, parks, lakes, cricket grounds, skating-rinks, rifle-ranges, and other contributions, direct or indirect, can scarcely be computed. But it is interesting to note that though gratitude is a scarce commodity, the class which has done this kind of thing in the past seems inclined to continue it. At the present moment there are few objects of outdoor interest, from the maintenance of model fruit farms to Shire horse-breeding and even the acclimatisation of exotic animals, in which the leaders of country life are not actively and successfully engaged, and we hope that the public in general will not be unmindful of the debt which rural England owes to these various and well-considered forms of enterprise.



FROM every part of the country where the fruit is of the least value to the farmer or gardener there arises a general wail about the destruction done by the bullfinches. There can be very little doubt that these jolly, but pernicious, birds are very much on the increase, whether in consequence of the Small Birds' Protection Act, or from whatever cause. Several correspondents ask what possible remedy there is against them. Of course netting is efficacious; but who will net all his large fruit trees? Another correspondent—one of the very few who has any suggestion to offer—states that he has done a deal in the way of frightening bullfinches and other marauders away by keeping a tame hawk. It is only a poor kestrel, and probably would do not a mite of harm to the small birds "if it were ever so"; but they do not seem to discriminate between the species of hawks, and by letting this kestrel out for a flight several times a day, luring it back after a short while, our correspondent says that he has succeeded in keeping the small birds in a state of such discomfort that they scarcely bother him at all. The plan seems well worthy of notice, and probably of wide imitation. It might even be worth a man's while to make a business of training and taming a number of the common kinds of hawks for such a purpose. Many would be glad to get such a scare-finch.

It is a wonderful testimony to the popularity enjoyed by the M.C.C. that it can even make the proposal of letting in 200 new members at a fee of £200 each. But what is much more wonderful is that the chance of coming in on these terms will, almost to a certainty, be accepted eagerly. A few years ago some members were let in, out of ordinary course, at £100 a-piece as entrance fee. That opportunity was snapped as a kelt takes a Jock Scott. So the committee of the club, learning the value of what they have to offer, are now putting just double the price on their wares. And without doubt they will find ready sale.

The spell of milder weather that favoured us just before the merry month of May set in so merrily with its snow-storms and cold winds (over much of the land, at any rate) gave a great chance to the trout angler, and some very good doings are recorded. But the curious thing was that, in spite of the mildness, the fly still continued backward in rising; so much so, that anglers were compelled to search about for some true cause

of their backwardness or absence. Hitherto we had been content to attribute it to the very obvious chilliness of the spring, but when mild weather came, and yet brought up few fly with it, then we were rather obliged to abandon that theory and ascribe the flylessness to the washing away of larvæ by the big floods. Certainly, that sounds like a reasonable explanation, and possibly it is even correct. In the meantime the fact still remains undeniable that fly are generally few.

It looks as if the Bill for making a close time for the Scottish trout were going to pass into law, and in all likelihood it was a wise discretion that led to the rejection of the proposition for extending that time, in the first instance, at any rate, to October 1st. There will be gnashing of teeth among the gosssoons who were wont to amuse themselves with the deft tickling of trout coming up to spawn.

"Beating the bounds" on Ascension Day is among the oldest survivals of popular education. We can hardly credit the current explanation of the phrase that the children of the parish were taken round the bounds and whipped at "doubtful passages" to make them recollect them. The origin of the word is probably due to the analogy of sport. But the whole custom is absolutely in keeping with the old Saxon respect for land and boundaries, and the reference to the "oldest inhabitants" and reliance on local knowledge shown when Doomsday Book was compiled. In country parishes the bounds are occasionally beaten, especially if an important block of property changes hands, as the new owner can often assert a right or make a claim, in a way practically effective, in an impersonal manner. In Oxford, the bounds of some of the tiny "parishes" once within the old walled city are now and again "beaten" by the children. This is a difficult matter, and involves incursions into all sorts of backyards and passages.

We have received a suggestion which we hardly know whether to take seriously. It is at least rather interesting. It was evolved by some correspondence that we have published on the best means of keeping turf, and especially the putting greens of golf grounds, free of worms. The suggestion practically is to electrocute them. It appears that at the time when one or two horses had just been killed by coming under the influence of underground electric wires, some experiments were made with a strongly-charged wire buried in earth in which there happened to be a good many worms. The worms, we are assured, came to the top of the ground and arranged themselves in a straight line, head to tail, parallel with the line of the electrical wire. There is an explanation, apparently, for their position. When a man stood with his feet astride the line of the wire, and kept each foot at exactly the same distance from the line, he was conscious of no shock, but as soon as he moved one foot nearer the wire than the other he received a shock. It is evident that this Indian file arrangement of the worms would effect something like the same disposition of the current towards them as a man could effect by bestriding the wire evenly. Probably their sensations led them to adopt it. This history, which we believe to be perfectly accurate, is certainly interesting; but we hardly think that it can lead to any practical results in a campaign against the worms.

American prisons have long been noted for experiments in the treatment of criminals. At Sing-Sing Prison, New York, they have gone from one extreme to another—from solitary confinement to "killing by kindness"; but the latest departure borders on the humorous. The convicts are to write and edit a weekly paper; "all inmates are invited to contribute," and the governor is to be editor-in-chief and censor. We hope his contributors will deal gently with him, and that Mr. William Sykes will not quarrel with his editor over doubtful spelling or the use of the split infinitive. Otherwise the editor is to be congratulated. Such a staff for an "Adventure Series," or a complete library of burglary and detective stories, has never been brought together. They have also the advantage of complete leisure, and those necessarily regular hours to which authors are notably careless. We can imagine the "posters": In our next "Mr. John Sheppard will write on Mr. Jonathan Wild"; "My Little Jemmy," a poem; "Masks and Places"; "Hints on Prison Diet"; "Country Homes," by an occasional visitor.

A while back, in these notes, we drew attention to the German fashion of growing gooseberries on standard bushes, that is to say, snipping off all but one stem, and all wing the plants to bush out at a convenient height for picking, like standard roses. The same effect of neatness is to be seen in the Scotch way of growing raspberry bushes, by training two adjacent bushes into an intermingling arch. In this way they are prevented from the untidy and inconvenient straggling aspect that raspberry bushes generally present, and it appears that the influence on the fruit-bearing qualities is good also.

It is only fair that Gibraltar, being a near part of the British Empire, should share our white man's burden; and it has it now in the shape of a muzzling order. Several cases of rabies have occurred, and the authorities are determined to stamp it out. This is all very well, for the Rock is more or less isolated; but—who is going to muzzle the monkeys? Those cheerful animals will belie their resemblance to man if they do not very quickly find out that the muzzled dog is harmless. Even cats are beginning to appreciate the fact in England; and as soon as the Gibraltar monkeys realise that a dog is all bark and no bite a terrier's life on the Rock will not be worth living. It is the old story of the balance of Nature. Whether you upset it with the muzzle, as in England, or the mongoose, as in Jamaica, you start a ball rolling and know not where it will stop. But it needs no gift of prophecy to foresee that the Gibraltar monkeys will have a good time.

The first half of May has been distinguished by cold winds, brilliant sunshine, and sharp frosts at night. Trees and hedges are only just struggling into leaf, and the blossoms on the earlier fruit trees have undoubtedly suffered. Indeed, the cry is now for milder weather and some growing showers. The grass has gone off a good deal, and the clovers and artificial grasses are still rather meagre. All this has had its effect on the price of store cattle, and the markets have not been so brisk during the past week. Rain is also wanted to help on the early-sown roots. Mangel and swedes have been well sown on a good seed-bed, but now they want moisture to start them. Then, too, there never were such times for working the fallows. Farmers who keep their fallows stirring with the harrows and the plough may hope to effectually rid the land of couch and annual weeds of all kinds. Early potatoes have felt the frost a good deal, and where they are through the soil they have been cut down. This has made the price of old potatoes higher. And indeed these latter are infinitely better than the dry and tasteless "new potatoes" which come from Malta and the Canary Islands.

Evidence of the partial recovery of agriculture is given by the report of a special correspondent of the *Morning Post*. He has visited Essex, of which Mr. Hunter Pringle in 1893 issued his celebrated map, showing the derelict and decaying farms marked in black. A great deal of what was black is now white, though there has been no great rise in the price of wheat. It is the dairy business, carried on mainly by Scotch farmers, that has worked this improvement. We cannot help remarking that land anywhere so near London should be worth cultivating or stocking as long as the population of the "Wen" grows at its present rate. It is simply a question of the amount which the cultivator is content to live upon, and of facility for transport. The Great Eastern Railway is a real farmers' friend. But, besides this, the Scotch farmers are their own best friends.

It was noted recently in one of the Kew publications that America now imports a quantity of fruit from the Mediterranean. Considering the immense fruit-growing industry of California and of the West Indies, this is a striking economic fact. But side by side with this a still stranger form of import is steadily increasing. Scotch potatoes are now exported to America. This year the demand has been greater than ever. It begins after Christmas, and goes on through the spring. The price is now £5 per ton. That England should be sending back to the United States the tuber, which was the first commodity imported thence by Sir Walter Raleigh, is creditable to the business energy of our farmers. We are also likely to reap a real return from the careful enforcement of precautions against contagious disease among our animals. America is about to invest largely in foreign pedigree stock. England is the only country quite free from foot and mouth disease, and for this, if for no other reason, the bulk of the purchases are likely to be made in this country.

The meeting at Westminster in support of the "Spurious Sports" Bill was not characterised by lucidity; and the cause is certainly not advanced by the argument that because bear-baiting, bull-baiting, and cock-fighting have been abolished, therefore rabbit-coursing, stag-hunting, and pigeon-shooting must be. The very juxtaposition of these so-called "objectionable pastimes" destroys all analogy between them. In none of the three abolished "sports" was the necessary element of sport, *i.e.*, the freedom of the quarry, allowed, whereas it is present in each of the others. In none of the three, again, was the element of human skill, as in pigeon-shooting, or of skill and risk, as in stag-hunting, to be found; and though rabbit-coursing may be least easily defended of modern sports, it still consists of the natural pursuit of a beast of the chase by a trained beast of prey. On the whole we are not sorry that the prospects of the Bill for this session are gloomy. In nothing more than the banning of sport must the introduction of the thin end of the wedge be more jealously watched.

Paris, which was the first city of the West to possess a giraffe, is now credited with the honour of owning a "white elephant" from Siam. We do not quite follow the story of his detachment from Siam, because even now the discovery of a white elephant is a matter of national rejoicing in Siam, and it seems unlikely that the Government, which is by law owner of all elephants in the kingdom, would part with one. One of the last to be discovered had a curious history. Two poor forest tribesmen caught a baby elephant. It was so smeared with mud that they had no idea that it was anything more than it looked—a useful little creature for which they would receive a few rupees. Then they thought they would wash it, and on doing so discovered that instead of an elephant they were entertaining an angel, or the Buddhist equivalent. The creature was taken in State to Bangkok, and the two captors were ennobled and granted pensions for life.

A true chapter has been added to the many excellent and sometimes true whaling stories with which we have been regaled of late, by the collision of a steamer on its way to Orkney with a whale that apparently was purposing to sail across its bows. The boat seems to have taken the whale amidships, and to have rammed it severely, for the poor brute was left dyeing the water with its blood, and complaining, after the manner of a leviathan, of its wounds. It is satisfactory to the very many of us who have enjoyed "The Cruise of the Cachalot" to learn that a select committee of whaling skippers has sat upon the stories and pronounced them to be perfectly true to the manners both of whales and whalers. To gain the *cachet* of this expert opinion is a real triumph for the author.

Suicide, according to a decadent author, is a fine art; but there are certainly many bungling amateurs. Such an one was the gentleman in Paris who flung himself before an automobile. There was a smash; over went the machine, out shot the owner, who was badly injured, and up got the would-be suicide, uninjured and still cursing his luck. Suicide by automobile comes under Shakespeare's definition of "vaulting ambition which o'erleaps its sell and falls on th' other." In this case the "sell" was for the suicide and "th' other" was the luckless owner of the motor, on whom it fell with violence.

Mr. H. Upcher writes from East Hall, Feltwell, Norfolk: "There is a hawk with a bell on working about Sheringham. I have not seen it myself, so cannot describe it. But if you should hear of anyone who has lost a falcon or goshawk, if they will write to my keeper, W. Riseboro, Sheringham Park, Cromer, he would be able to say when and where it was last seen. I hear it killed a poor old hen pheasant the other day which had just come off a nest of fourteen eggs!" Any of our readers who have recently lost a hawk, and who see this letter, will appreciate the notification of its appearance, and doubtless hasten to recapture the bird, which, notwithstanding, is evidently an expensive kind of stranger to entertain, and will doubtless kill more pheasants. In the present revival of hawking, which often leads to invasions of this kind, the forbearance of sportsmen fond of shooting deserves recognition.

Of all the Earls and Barons who fought at Crecy, only three are now represented in the male line, *viz.*, Talbot, West, and Willoughby (Shrewsbury, De la Warr, and Willoughby). So says Major-General the Hon. G. Wrottesley, after examining the archives of the Record Office. But this enquiry also throws a curious light on the rareness of continuity in the possession of landed estates. A thousand knights and esquires fought at Crecy, all of whom were land-owners. These are now represented by about eighty surviving families. But of these only fifteen still hold the land for which their ancestors did service at Crecy.

According to the *Live Stock Journal*, Canadian enterprise has hit on a novel use for the survivors of the bison herds, a few of which still remain in the colony. These are being crossed with Aberdeen-Angus cattle, with a view to obtaining a creature which may carry a heavy coat and make the skin valuable for robes. It was shown by experiments carried on at our Zoological Gardens that it is possible to obtain such crosses, and the hybrids are fertile; so that if this experiment is a success, part of the original idea with which our Zoo was started—*viz.*, that of improving domestic breeds by introducing useful wild ones and crossing them—will have borne fruit at last. The hybrids are said to be very like the bison in front, and to carry heavy coats.

The injunction against the new tennis court at Lord's has been removed, and they are pressing on the building with all speed, but of course it will not be completed in time for the big tennis matches of the year. The new stand is finished, and is said to be capable of holding 10,000 people; but will not the authorities at Lord's take measures for informing the public when all the accommodation is exhausted, by means of notices at St. John's Wood Station and Baker Street Station? The

holding power of the ground is not unlimited, and we do not want a repetition of the bombardment with paper bags full of gravel and the other pleasant incidents that enlivened an Australian test match a year or two ago. We seemed rather near a dangerous "row." They ought not to admit more within the gates than the ground can fairly hold.

The fact that three horse shows will be held within a drive of London during the early part of June is likely to be welcomed by many country visitors who are in town for the season. Of these exhibitions the first is that held at the Crystal Palace, which commences on Saturday, June 3rd, and closes on Tuesday, June 6th, a considerable alteration having been effected in the composition of the prize schedule, as hunters are now more encouraged than they were, whilst the institution of five classes for Hackney stallions is an experiment that will be watched with interest, as it has not hitherto been regarded as probable that owners of valuable sires would permit them to be absent from home for six days in the middle of the season. Next comes a new fixture, namely, that held at Wembley Park by Mr. Vero Shaw, the old manager of the Crystal Palace shows, who is accompanied to his new home by his entire staff of stewards, and has received some very liberal support in the way of prizes from Lord Tredegar, Sir Walter Gilbey, and other well-known exhibitors. As might be expected, the harness classes are the great feature of the programme at Wembley, but there is a £100 prize offered for jumpers; and exhibitors will note with satisfaction that there is a fourth prize in almost every class. The last of the three shows is the Richmond gathering, which comes off on the 9th and 10th of June, with Captain Fitzgerald at his old place at the head of affairs. We cannot detect any change in the admirably-arranged schedule, which has been so popular amongst exhibitors of horses for some years past, and, of course, the valuable challenge cups and special prizes which have attracted so many entries upon former occasions will be again offered for competition.

Wild Ducks' Nests.



H. E. Upchen. PUZZLE—FIND THE DUCK. Copyright

FEW birds are more fanciful in choosing their nesting-places than wild ducks; and none are more interesting to watch than they are when sitting on their eggs and rearing their young.

Near houses they sometimes become almost domesticated at this season, while "tame" wild ducks become tamer still, and are among the prettiest and most confiding of pets.

Two pairs last year, at an ancient Essex house, used to fly up some 300yds. from the lake, on purpose to make their nests in some flower-beds. These beds were protected from the rabbits by wire-netting, and one duck used to fly on to this very unstable resting-place, poise herself for a moment, and then fly on to the nest so as not to make a path through the flowers, which might betray the whereabouts of the precious eggs.

This liking for nesting quite close to the house is accompanied by a quite charming access of confidence on the part of the birds. The writer was taken two weeks ago to see a wild duck sitting just behind Sheringham Hall, on the steep bank of oak-grown hill behind the house of the present High Sheriff of Norfolk. This wood consists of very curiously-grown oaks, which have sprung, to all appearances, from young shoots which had been cut down to the ground at some distant date, so that the trees are pollards, only pollards springing from the ground, instead of having a crown at some 12ft. or 14ft. from the ground.

In the holes in these tree bottoms the wild ducks lay. But this particular duck had made her nest about 4½ft. from the ground in a mass of twigs growing from the trunk. We give an



W. Herrington. IN AN ANCIENT LIME TREE. Copyright

illustration of the site of this nest. The puzzle is to FIND THE DUCK, whose head and eye are just visible in the centre. The nest was within a stone's throw of the back windows of the house, and the bird was sitting when we came to see it. She was so tame that she would allow herself to be stroked as she sat on the eggs when visited by those whom she knew, but with three people, two of them strangers, looking at her, she was obviously nervous, for though she kept as still as stone, she was quite "trembling," as birds do, with an almost invisible motion of the feathers. These—blackish-brown edged with russet—were exactly the colour of the dead leaves lodged in the twigs round her, and at 5yds. she was practically invisible.

The second nest here shown was less than a quarter of a mile from the old coaching road from London to Brighton, in AN ANCIENT LIME TREE. Twelve eggs were laid in it. Only a few yards away was another wild duck's nest, made in the grass by the water-side.

SHOOTING GOSSIP.

IF one searched the records at the Patent Office for the last five years, one would find that nine-tenths of the patents connected with sporting firearms applied for during that period were in reference to various ways of making single triggers for double-barrelled guns; that some sixty or more patents have been taken out by as many gun-makers for single triggers during the period mentioned; that, in fact, there is scarcely a gun-maker of any standing in England, from Mr. Purdey downwards, who has not registered some special design that he imagines entitles him to a patent for the building of single-triggered firearms. Never in fact in the history of gun-making, so far as we know it, has there been such a rush to secure something that may protect and even justify the making of game guns with one trigger instead of two. Further, if one went into the workshops of a dozen of the leading London makers, he would find that in eleven of them the artisans were busy making guns with one trigger on various systems, all in execution of orders sent in to their employers by the sporting public, and if he were privileged to examine the order-books of these eleven firms he would find that nearly one-half of the new orders stipulated for the new mechanism in triggers when the new guns were

delivered to their purchasers. This all goes to show that the sporting demand for the latest improvement is a very lively one, that the new trigger is not a mere flash in the pan, but a decided advance in gun-making, and appreciated as such by the world of sport. We are quite aware that the contrary view is taken by at least one well-known and old-established firm of gun-makers, who do not recommend and will not accept orders for single triggers, but it is only the exception that proves the rule, that intelligent sporting opinion has pronounced very decidedly the opposite opinion, and are backing up their decision by their orders. One leading firm, indeed, last year informed us that they had made three single-triggered guns to every double one they turned out, and a perusal of their order-book this year shows that out of a hundred guns already in hand, seventy-five are being made with the new mechanism. Clearer proof than this of the regard in which reliable single triggers are coming to be held by our leading sportsmen could not be afforded. In truth, though it may seem over-bold to hazard the statement, we have come to the conclusion that the double trigger is doomed to extinction, and that within a very few years. For those who may not be able within that period to order new guns can at least afford £5 or so for the conversion of their old ones, which we observe one enterprising maker is now making a leading feature of. It does not need much foresight or judgment, therefore, to recognise that the single-trigger mechanism has come to stay and to conquer, despite all the opposition it encountered on its arrival some five years ago. That opposition still exists, though it has dwindled almost into insignificance. Still, one of the leading gun-makers this week wrote us on the subject as follows: "Though single-trigger guns have many acute and earnest supporters, they do not offer the advantages to the shooter in time-saving apparatus that are bestowed by other improvements that have also augmented the parts of a gun. In nearly every single trigger mechanism there are additional parts which have important functions to perform, and have, therefore, a great amount of wear upon them. Some makers claim that their single-trigger arrangement does not constitute an extra number of limbs, but this is hardly a fair way of putting it, because some of the limbs which have been abolished have been so unimportant, and have had so little work to do, that to substitute others, which have a larger amount of work to perform, is to add complexity to a simplicity before existing. It should be borne in mind, too, that such an addition to the gun as the ejector mechanism was absolutely independent of the main lock work, so that if the ejector by any possibility became deranged a shooter's gun was not rendered useless, whereas if the additional parts required for single-trigger mechanism get out of order the functions of the gun are entirely stopped. There are people who consider that

the time and trouble saving improvements conferred by the barrel-cocking hammerless gun, and by the ejector mechanism, in doing automatically what before had to be done by hand, do not apply to the single-trigger mechanism." These sentiments savour somewhat of special pleading, and we give them here solely as the expression of the views of a very small minority of the gun trade that has not yet fallen in with the new movement. If we chose, we could have written our correspondent that he is entirely wrong in assuming that the new mechanism is very liable to get out of order or does so. We have seen guns with the single-trigger mechanism come back to their makers after three seasons' hard shooting, without a single fault to find with the mechanism actuating the triggers, though the pull may have become somewhat harder and had to be reduced, as it often occurs with double-triggered guns. The new mechanism, in fact, is very simple and strong, likely to last as long as any other part of the action, which is more than can be said of the ejector mechanism that our correspondent puts in antagonism to it.

To the sportsman, the advantages of the single trigger are so evident, that it is almost unnecessary to point them out here. In guns to be used in uncivilised countries, or far removed from gun-making skill, it might be a risk to put in single triggers, because like every other part of a gun they are not quite free from danger of accident, and one might experience difficulty in remedying such accident without the aid of a gun-maker. But this might be said of all fine guns, for which the new mechanism is at present best suited. On another occasion we may go more fully into the various systems on which single triggers are now being constructed. Let it suffice to say here that they are all more or less variations on the original patent applied for in 1894 and obtained in 1895, by which recoil was utilised for preventing the involuntary discharge of the second barrel. Some day, we presume, the question will have to be settled whether all these variations are not infringements also. Meantime, almost every gun-maker considers himself the owner of a valid patent, on which he is entitled to go on making single-trigger guns for his customers, without the payment of any royalty whatever. Every week sees a new applicant at the Patent Office even now—now that for four seasons single triggers have been used in the coverts—and the Patent Office authorities go on taking their fees for variation after variation on the master principle of recoil utilisation, the only principle on which we can have reliable single triggers. It is time that this complication of patents should be straightened out, and credit given where it is due for the invention that has enabled one trigger to do the work of two, an invention that we regard as the most striking and useful in gunnery of the last decade in the century.

NEVIS.



SPRING TABLE DECORATION.

EVERY year we are threatened with the extinction of the useful table centre, but in spite of threats it still survives, at all events for homely dinner-parties, and there is no doubt that it is of the greatest assistance to an amateur in arranging a dinner-table. The fashion of substituting brocaded satin for damask linen table-cloths seems likely to be more popular than ever. The fact that the entire cloth is of satin or silk is often only disclosed when the linen and lace insertion slips are withdrawn before the dessert is placed on the table; but this season I learn that the slips are no longer to be used. A table with a cloth of the above description does not of course require a centre-spread, and at this time of year a lovely arrangement, which, when finished, closely resembles an "orchid table," could easily be carried out as follows: Place a large silver bowl on a silver stand in the middle of the table and fill it with yellow, mauve, purple, and white iris, keeping the flowers in an upright position by the aid of Japanese wedges. Use some of the leaves of the flowers and plenty of asparagus fern to give the necessary lightness to the arrangement, and let a trail of smilax encircle the base of the stand. Four or six (according to the size of the table) small silver bowls or old silver decanter holders filled in the same way as the centre bowl should be placed at intervals about the table. Surround each with a spray of smilax, and connect them with trails of smilax to the base of the silver stand. Another scheme, which is richer in colouring and therefore particularly suitable for a white cloth, is to fill the silver bowls with rhododendrons, shading from mauve to pink, and in place of the asparagus fern to use masses of the small white gypsophila. I think anyone who tries this arrangement will agree that the effect is beautiful.

It is well to bear in mind when arranging a dinner-table that extravagance in colouring seldom produces a satisfactory result, and as far as possible a design should be carried out in flowers of one or two colours. It is not an easy matter to find any really original and at the same time beautiful scheme of

table decoration, but at the present season of the year Nature provides us with such an abundance of decorative material that with very little trouble the dinner-table may be made a vision of beauty. A simple arrangement of flowers is often more effective and pleasing to the eye than an elaborate scheme of decoration. For instance, I think few people would not admire a luncheon-table arranged with tall green glasses, of artistic design, filled with large golden kingcups, white marguerites, feathery green, and brown sedge, grass, and bowls of the same glass—finger glasses answer the purpose admirably—with masses of large blue forget-me-not and snowy woodruff.

The following is another pretty but rather more elaborate arrangement, suitable for a dinner-table. The centre-spread of white silk gauze is very much drawn and puffed all over, and is made on a satin foundation to suit the shape of the table for which it is intended; it is edged with trails of smilax, and the middle is occupied by a large bowl of Venetian glass, in pink shading to pale copper colour, filled with mauve lilac and clusters of pale pink ivy-leaf geranium and asparagus fern. The bowl is surrounded by slender vases of the Venetian glass containing tall sprays of lilac and the pink geranium and fern, and at the corners of the table smaller glass bowls of the flowers are placed. To complete the success of the scheme, little dishes of Venetian glass, containing sweets to match the colours of the flowers, should take the place of the silver *bonbonnières*.

A large round table looks charming decorated with baskets of flowers; at the moment azaleas can be used with good effect, but a little later on roses of different shades would be lovely. A large white china basket with a high handle is required for the middle of the table; this should stand on a circular piece of pale green mirror velvet, or brocaded satin, edged with a ruche of green chiffon. Pink, red, and white azaleas, and a profusion of asparagus fern, should be arranged as lightly as possible in the basket, and the handle should be bound with pink and red ribbons (to match the flowers) which should finish in a bow at

the top. Six smaller baskets, similarly filled and decorated (only using rather narrower ribbon), should be placed round the centre-spread, and from the top of each the ribbons should be carried up to the handle of the large basket, where they should be fastened under the bow; the ribbons must not be drawn tight, but should be allowed to fall into graceful curves.

CHARLOTTE RUSSE.

Famous Oaks.

IT needs no words of the writer to praise the kingly oak, the pride of Britain's forests and woodlands. The tree, as Burnet observes, is celebrated "in story and in song, in the forest and the field, and unrivalled in commerce and the arts," sacred alike to Greek, Roman, and Hebrew, and revered by the poets of all ages.

We shall not describe the great family on the present occasion, nor even mention individual kinds, as our illustration suggests another theme—famous oaks, battered by the storms of centuries, but still spreading their noble boughs in the greenwood, tinting it with colour throughout the seasons, from the soft yellow and brown of the unfolding leaves to the full green of summer and russet browns and crimsons of autumn. The oak is always picturesque, and its ruggedness delights the painter of sylvan scenes.

Each county possesses its famous oaks, associated, perhaps, with some historical scene or weird legend of the past. There are so many noble trees that we must perforce refer to a few only, and one of these is the Marton Oak, of which an illustration is given. This is in the grounds of the once famous Marton Hall, at one time the residence of the eldest son of the Devonport family, but now a farmhouse. The oak, according to Earwaker's "East Cheshire," is very fine, and, although but little known, is believed to be the largest in England. It stands in the farmyard, and has been used of late years as a tethering place for a bull, as a pigstye, and for sundry other purposes. The circumference about 4ft. from the ground is 43ft., and the longest diameter 15ft. 6in. In every park or garden almost some ancient monarch arrests attention. When in the spacious grounds of Woburn Abbey we were shown the Abbot's Oak, on the branches of which Stowe, as well as other historians, relates that the abbot and prior of Woburn, the vicar of Puddington, and other contumacious folk were hanged by the will of Henry VIII. Our ancient forests abound in noble oaks, the forest of Windsor especially so, as there are the Queen Anne's Oak, Queen Charlotte's Oak, Herne's Oak, and the King's Oak; many, alas, have long since probably crumbled away, as one cannot always believe the local historian. The King's Oak at Windsor was supposed to be William the Conqueror's favourite tree, and is over 1,000 years old. Burnet says, "We lunched in it September 2nd, 1829; it would accommodate at least twenty persons with standing room, and ten or twelve might sit down comfortably to dinner. I think at Willis's or in Guildhall I have danced a quadrille in smaller space." Of Herne's Oak, immortalised by Shakespeare, the oak upon which the famous hunter hanged himself, we need not write.

As famous as any is the Fairlop Oak in Essex. It was in a clearing in Hainault Forest, and, according to old accounts, the circumference of its trunk near the ground was 48ft., it measured 36ft. round, and the short bole was divided into eleven vast branches. These boughs overspread an area 300ft. in circuit. Our readers have read, doubtless, of the fair held beneath the spreading branches of the oak. This festival arose in a quaint way. Daniel Day, an eccentric individual, was wont on the first Friday in July to invite his friends to a feast of beans and bacon beneath the sheltering branches; but this proved too much for the villagers around, for curiosity led them to the spot, with the result that about 1725 the fair was established, and held on July 2nd for many years.

Gilpin records many fine oaks in the New Forest, and we may mention the great tree at Panshanger, Knole, and the Yardley and Cowthorpe Oaks. Loudon, in his exhaustive work concerning trees and shrubs (1844), says the largest oaks still existing appear to be the Salcey Oak in Northamptonshire, with a trunk 46ft. in circumference, the Grindstone Oak in Surrey, 48ft., the Hempstead Oak in Essex, 53ft., the Merton Oak in Norfolk, 63ft., and the Cowthorpe Oak in Yorkshire, 78ft.

WHAT THE TIGER DID.

IN a certain district of Assam there is a large tea garden, which has an out-garden about a mile away, with a road connecting through big jungle. This big jungle, like all other big jungles out here, is always more or less infested by tigers, and tigers are the aim and object of the sporting spirit of any sporting English community. But although there are a great number of tigers in these Assam jungles, they are difficult to locate, more difficult to see, and still more difficult to shoot. Many men can say "There is a tiger in such and such a jungle, he killed a cow the other day"; few men can say, "I saw a tiger," and if they did it would be most likely when they were not carrying a gun. Some men, however, can say, "I had a shot at one over a kill or otherwise, and missed." But there are men who have shot several, and others who have shot a great many. Amongst the former were Smith and Brown.

Now Smith and Brown were staying on the large tea garden, and one morning it was reported that a tiger had killed a cow very near the road leading to the out-garden. Smith and Brown, men of thirty and thirty-five years of age,



C. Bent.

MARTON OAK.

Copyright

had not lost their keenness, and immediately had a chung put up in the most advantageous position, and when the sun was on the decline, between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., took their places for the patient silent wait. About 5 p.m. the tiger appeared just outside the jungle without sound, and at the same instant the out-garden pony was heard being led along the road to the Big Bungalow.

Smith whispered to Brown, "Let's wait and see what the tiger does."

The tiger sat on his haunches and looked out along the road, then subsided slowly, slowly, down, down, until he was quite invisible. And the syce and pony went by within 10yds. of the tiger, sublimely unconscious of his presence.

Then the tiger crept out towards the kill and stretched himself, and Smith raised his gun, having an excellent shot; but Brown put his hand on his arm, and said, "Half a moment; let's watch him a second."

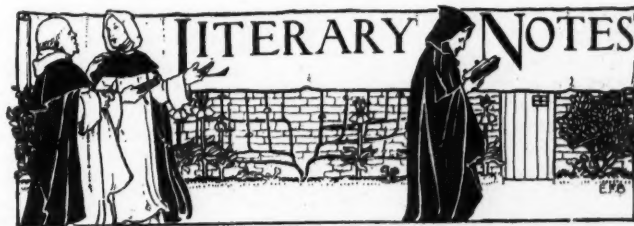
Then the tiger walked round the kill, sniffing at the dead carcass, did not seem satisfied, and started to walk back into the jungle. Brown thought "Now or never," but Smith whispered, "Don't fire, and he'll come back to eat or carry the carcass away." So these two men of great experience watched the beast walk quietly away. So Smith and Brown waited, and the tiger killed that night two miles away—rather difficult to prove the last assertion.

About 12 o'clock they got down from the chung and wandered back dreamily and sadly to the bungalow. After a peg and a cigarette they looked at each other and spoke together, "We were — asses." As a matter of fact they very much wanted to determine whether the tiger lifts the kill off the ground or drags it, and so they lost an exceptional opportunity.

JUNGLE.

Photographic Competition.

THE prize of £5 for the best set of photographs of wintry scenes at or about an old country house has been awarded to Mrs. Delves Broughton, of 4, The Embankment, Bedford, for a series of pictures illustrating scenes in snow and frost round an English country house. The illustrations will, it is proposed, be published next winter in COUNTRY LIFE. Considering the little frost and snow we experienced last season, Mrs. Delves Broughton's photographs are highly creditable.



THERE is no race-course like the Ascot. The Doncaster crowd may be keener, the business of the Turf may be more closely followed at Newmarket, but the charm of Ascot is peculiar to itself. Messrs. Hodder Brothers of Newman Street have hit upon a capital idea, therefore, in undertaking a history of the Royal race-course, which will appear next autumn. From a prospectus that has been sent me, I gather that the book will cover a good deal of ground; in fact, that it will be a regular Gold Cup performance. Two chapters will deal with the annals of Ascot, from the foundation of the meeting by the Duke of Cumberland in 1727 down to the present time. Others will describe the buildings, give biographies of the makers of Ascot, lists and pedigrees of famous horses, notes on jockeys and trainers, and so forth. "Royal Ascot: Its History

and Associations"—for that is to be the title—will be profusely illustrated, and if the reproductions are "up to sample," as no doubt they will be, the result will be a handsome volume. One is glad to note that the old-time town has not been forgotten, since pains have been taken to obtain authentic pictures of the Ascot of a past century.

In writing about the Turf, I am reminded that a successor to Adam Lindsay Gordon has arisen in Australia. This is Mr. E. Mackenzie Maunde-Thompson, who writes as "Portsea" in the Melbourne papers. There is a fine rush about much of his verse, and amateur riders will fully appreciate the point of his advice to Amiable, the mare who won the Newmarket Handicap last year.

"When the sound of hoofs draws near,
Thund'ring onward in the rear,
Keep a length of daylight clear,
If you can,
'Twixt the foremost of your foes
And yourself; for well one knows,
How they jostle, push, and close,
In the van."

Mr. Maunde-Thompson, besides, prints and binds his poems as well as writes them. The pretty little volume which he has forwarded to COUNTRY LIFE office was produced from a printing press made by himself out of blocks of wood, and "set up" by himself, after a lesson from a practical compositor. The binding is neatly backed with the skin of a black snake, a species which is common in Victoria. The booklet is distinctly a curiosity, and something better than that, for its author has in him a spark of the sacred fire. He also claims to be a sound tipster, since out of twenty-three forecasts made in his racing poems he has placed six firsts, two seconds, and two thirds. If steadily followed, he will have placed the backers of his selections on velvet.

The noble animal finds a very different exponent of his merits in Mr. Savigear, who has been an instructor for nearly forty years, first in the Royal Horse Artillery, then in the 17th Lancers, and afterwards at the Royal Military College. His "Guide to Horsemanship and Horse Training" (Farmer and Sons, Kensington) ought to be most useful for militia officers and candidates for Woolwich and Sandhurst. "At the word 'One,' raise the hands in front of the body"—there is any amount of that, and it all has, of course, to be acquired. The information about the training of young cavalry horses, too, seems thoroughly practical, and, altogether, the book justifies its editor, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Graham, in having recommended Mr. Savigear to add authorship to equestrianism, as taught by him at the riding school at Earl's Court.

Which is the popular book of the season? The Academy has decided by means of enquiries from correspondents in a number of towns. How many correspondents answered in each town one does not gather, and it is to be noticed that neither Manchester nor Liverpool are included in the list, while in London the West Central district alone has been canvassed. This is rather mysterious. Does the Academy scorn Lancashire, and does it regard cultured Bloomsbury as having supplanted cultured Bedford Park? Who shall satisfy these disturbing doubts? The prize of popularity, anyhow, has been won by a capital novel, Miss Ellen Thornycroft Fowler's "A Double Thread." Next comes Miss Beatrice Harraden's "The Fowler," a selection which seems to show that reviewers do not dictate what the public should read quite as imperiously as they imagine; and then a very mixed lot indeed—(3) The "Golden Treasury" edition of "The Rulajāt of Omar Kayyam"; (4) Mr. Crockett's "The Black Douglas"; (5) Mr. Haggard's "The Swallow"; and (6) the half-guinea edition of Tennyson's "Life." What does it all mean?

Mr. Leonard Meyrick is a novelist who has discovered quite a new grievance. He has written a story with a Maud for his heroine, and thought of her as Maud for three years. Then comes Mr. Pett Ridge with his "Mord Em'ly" and the "Alice Maude" of the "Hooligan Papers," and Maud has become as 'Arriet or 'Liza. Mr. Meyrick's grumble is perfectly intelligible, but he has, of course, no remedy. Maud cannot be copyrighted, and there is the end of the matter. Writers of fiction, if they wish to protect themselves, will either have to coin new names, like Mr. Rudyard Kipling's Badalia, or to discover local variants. Izett, a pretty Devonshire version of Elizabeth, has never, to my knowledge, appeared in fiction. But it would fit a humble heroine capably, and even Lady Izett would have the attractiveness of the unusual.

Dear old Hans Christian Andersen has been republished by Messrs. Newnes, with multitudinous illustrations by Helen Stratton. No self-respecting nursery should be without it. The same firm appeal to maturer readers with an excellent cheap edition of Mr. H. M. Stanley's "Through the Dark Continent." The author has prefaced it with an important survey of the white man's progress in Africa since the book was written, and a well-considered defence of the Congo State. Messrs. Newnes's special London Season Number of the *Ladies' Field*—published on the 17th—contains articles by some graceful writers, notably Mrs. Ella Hepworth Dixon and Mrs. Dew-Smith, whose "Amateur Gardening" used to be much appreciated by readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. English, French, and Viennese fashions are surveyed, and a needlecraft supplement, printed in three colours, and designed by Leslie Wilson, forms a notable feature.

Nothing much seems to be stirring in the domain of fiction, though speculation is rife as to the degree of success that Messrs. Methuen's series of sixpenny novels will secure. Until the returns prove whether the pessimists are in the right or the wrong, the publishers are at least to be congratulated on having invented a decidedly taking cover of crimson and gold, and on having used what looks like a marvel in the way of cheap and yet adequate paper. With regard to individual authors, the most important item of information is that Mr. Richard Whiting will follow up "No. 5, John Street" by another novel which is to appear in the autumn. It is, there ore, too late to suggest a subject to him, but why should not he or another give us later on a study of the Irish Cockneys, taken as a class? They are most interesting, inasmuch as they have transplanted many customs from the "ould counthry," the wake included, while the Catholic priests have not received the attention from novelists which they eminently deserve. Since slum-fiction is in fashion, a new departure from the ordinary 'Lizas and 'Tildas would be not unwelcome.

In these days of inexpensive publications it causes little surprise to find that more than one firm, alive to the requirements of the hour, have entered the field to supply the demand made by the masses for cheap music. Amongst them, and by no means occupying a low position, is Mr. Thomas Holloway, who has recently issued two songs which bid fair to become popular favourites. The two pieces are entitled "The Old Fiddler" and "Remembrance" respectively. They are well printed upon good quality paper, and, although published at 2s. each, the songs can be obtained from 78, Oxford Street, London, W., for 2½d. each.

Books to order from the library:—

- "The Naval Pioneers of Australia." L. Becke and W. Jeffery. (Longmans.)
- "A History of Winchester College." A. F. Leach. (Duckworth.)
- "Shakespeare in France." J. J. Jasseraud. (Fisher Unwin.)
- "The Flora of Cheshire." Late Lord De Tabley. (Longmans.)
- "Strong Hearts." G. W. Cable. (Hodder and Stoughton.)
- "A History of the Pianoforte." O. Bie. (Dent.)

LOOKER-ON.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece is from a photograph of Lady Fingall, whose husband, the eleventh Earl of Fingall, was State Steward to Earl Spencer when Viceroy of Ireland. The family seat is Killeen Castle, Dunsany, County Meath.



FITTING-OUT.

SIGNS are not wanting that the yachting season is close at hand. A few white wings have been seen flitting about the Solent, and the big yards of Southampton, Cowes, and other important centres of our pleasure fleet have already begun to hum with the renewed vigour of numbers of busy workers. Many important questions are involved in fitting-out; and it is not a subject that can be lightly passed by, for comfort and even safety depend to no small extent upon the way in which a yacht is prepared for the summer's work. Neither can the owner afford to leave everything to his skipper and builder, for these two worthies are likely to lay their heads together, with the result that his fitting-out bill will reach enormous proportions. Furthermore, there are certain matters as regards internal fitment that can never be left in the hands of one unaccustomed to luxury, such as a yacht captain, whose rough sea-faring experiences will hardly coincide with the more cultivated and refined feelings of a well-brought-up and educated gentleman. I allude more particularly to the redecoration of saloon and cabins, where good taste is a *sine qua non*, unless the owner does not mind beholding adornment that is far from artistic.

Before fitting-out operations are started, it is of the utmost importance that all work that cannot be undertaken by the crew should be completed. That is to say, all alterations and repairs to the structural part of the vessel, and to the gear that is permanently attached to the yacht, should be finished before the captain and his subordinates take possession, otherwise friction is bound to arise between the skipper and his crew on the one part and the builder and his workmen on the other. Again, mechanics at work on a yacht always hinder the progress that should be made in the labour of preparation by the sailors themselves. If this principle of doing one thing at a time is not adhered to, what usually happens is this. We will suppose that the day before the yacht is to be hauled forth from her mud berth the capstan is found to be defective. The skipper hurriedly sends ashore for a smith, and after an irritating delay the son of Vulcan arrives in a dirty-looking punt propelled by one of his satellites, in the shape of an ill-conditioned youth. The pair come aboard, the boy carrying a greasy bag of tools, which he places on the snowy decks with the airy nonchalance of his class. This manoeuvre brings forth the wrath of the captain and a general grumble from the crew, who know that the fore deck will require not a little attention after their unwelcome visitors have departed. The smith now proceeds to carefully examine the capstan, and soon comes to the conclusion that the tools he has with him are insufficient or unsuitable for the job. He consequently has to go ashore for fresh implements; in the course of half-an-hour he casually returns, and soon afterwards the dinner-bell rings, which necessitates a further adjournment, and consequently the capstan is not finished until late in the afternoon. These vexatious impediments to the otherwise even course of fitting-out might easily have been prevented by the owner and skipper holding a preliminary examination of the vessel's fittings. Mechanics

create a certain amount of nuisance by leaving behind their shavings, sawdust, and the like, and in this way trouble often is created between the fore-castle and the yard.

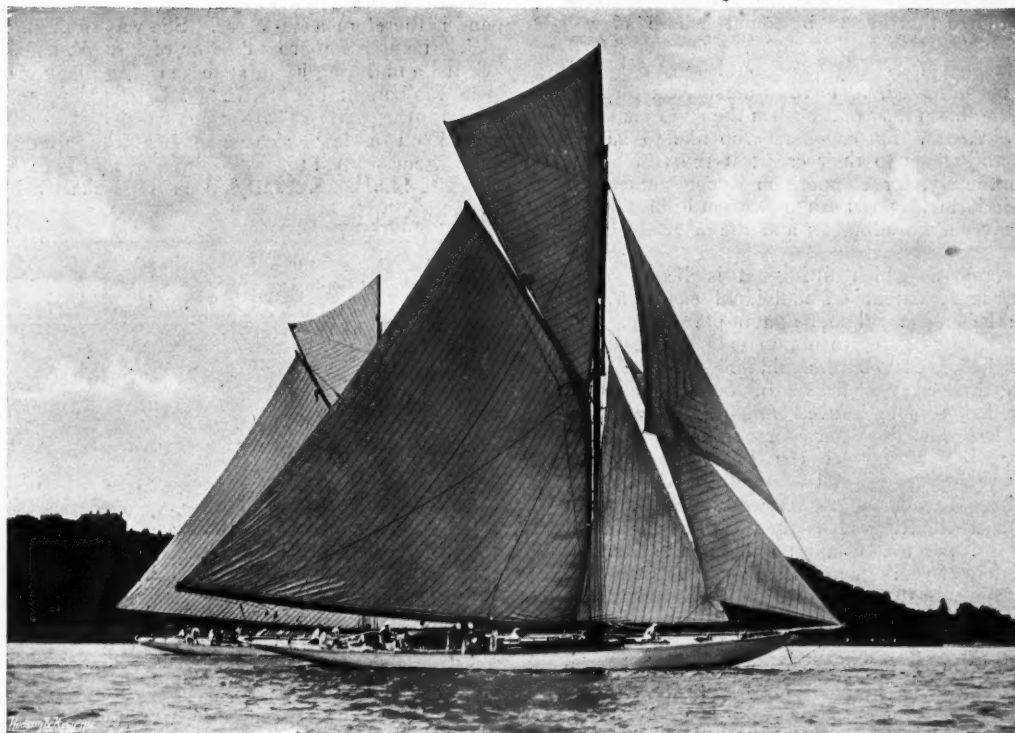
We will suppose that a careful owner has had all his structural alterations completed in good time, and that the immovable fittings have been examined and overhauled. The question of fitting-out then naturally divides itself into three parts, viz., (1) the painting

and varnishing of the hull, spars, boats, and the internal parts of the vessel; (2) repairs and renewals to the equipment below decks; and (3) making good ropes, spars, sails, and their attendant gear. We will presume that anchors and chains and such-like accessories as may require regalanising have already been overhauled and received attention. A great quantity of paint and varnish will be used, for all the external wooden parts of the vessel and her gear that are exposed to the action of

the air will have to receive a coat or two of the one or the other. The decks, which were daubed over with common varnish when the yacht was laid up, will now have to be cleaned off with a special preparation sold by yacht-builders for the purpose. Much of the bright work will have to be scraped before varnish is applied, and a whole host of "unconsidered trifles" will have to receive attention. As regards ropes, nothing should be left to chance, for

unsoundness in this direction might easily cost a man's life, while for a moment imagine, say, a main sheet, or other important rope, carrying away in a seaway, or among a crowd of vessels, and the disastrous consequences that would inevitably follow.

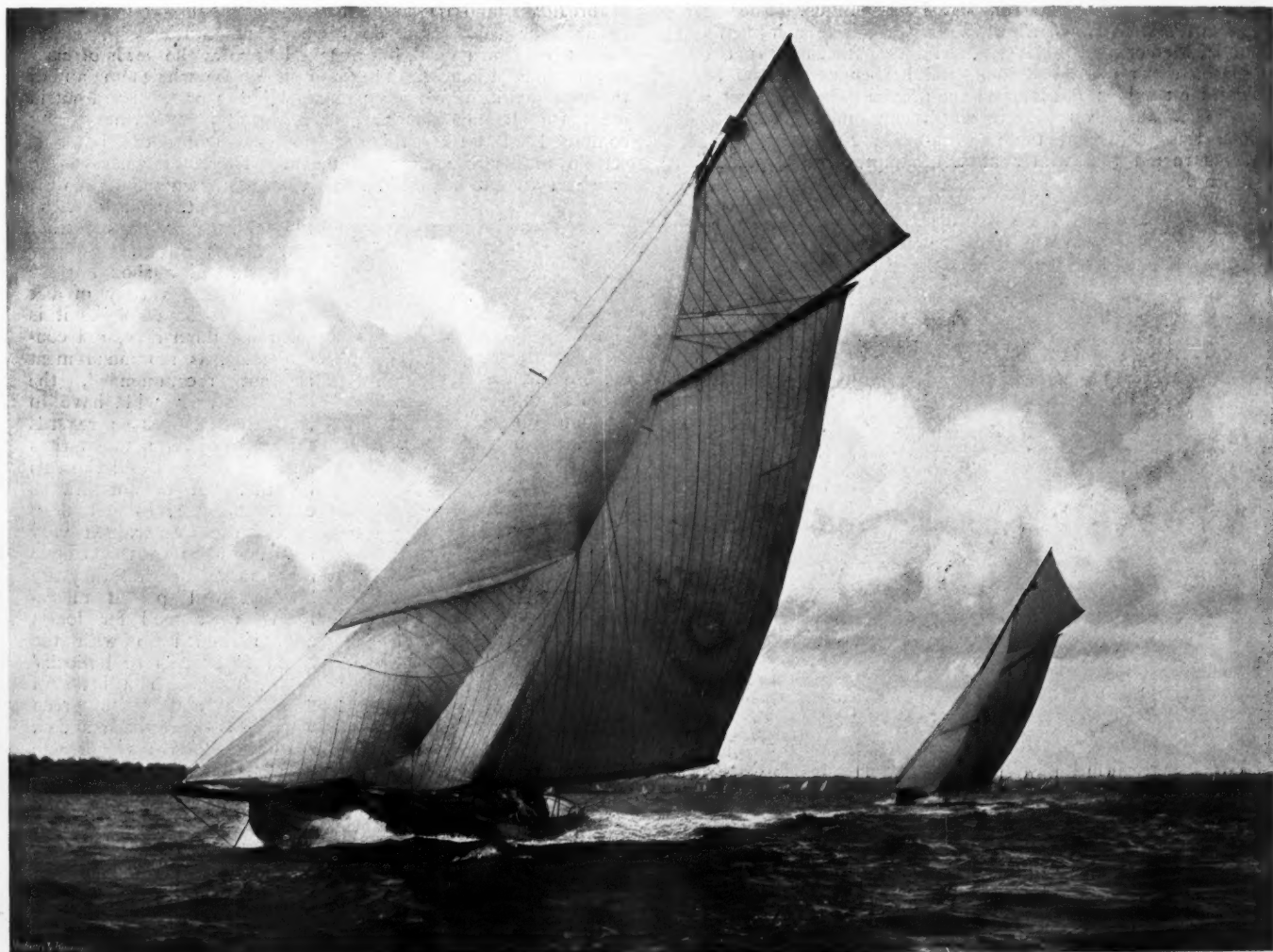
Not the least important part of a yacht's gear, as regards comfort, which should be carefully overhauled is that which we may class under the head of domestic appliances and accessories, such as the bedding, which must be well aired, the stove



West and Son,

ASTRILD AND KOMMODE.

Southsea.



West and Son,

MORNING STAR.

Southsea.

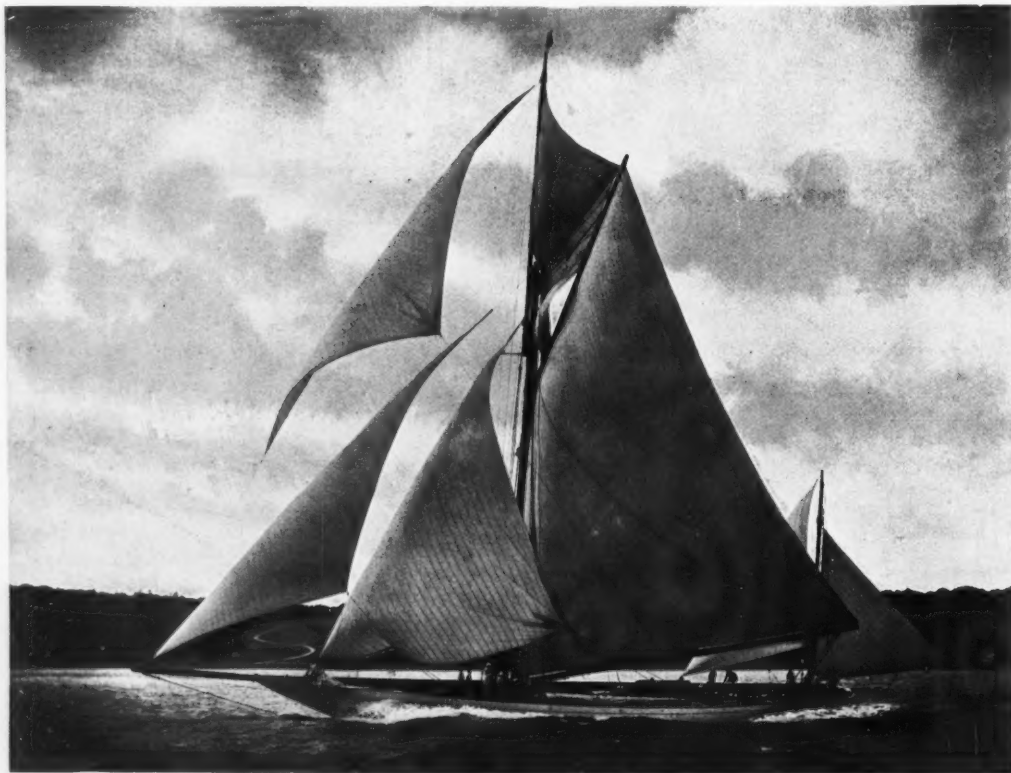
and attendant utensils which may require repair, and those hundred and one things that are to be found ashore as well as afloat.

In the case of racing yachts early fitting-out is most essential, for new sails must be stretched, and crews must work down in their places, so that no hitch may occur when their vessels are in actual competition. Again, those owners who like to have a long string of winning flags to their credit at the end of the season should fit-out early, for competition is not so keen in May and June as it is in July and August, when in most years the racing fleet receives large additions and the new boats have got well into trim.

Although the time at which fitting-out is begun must depend to a very large extent on individual cases, a few general remarks on the subject will not be out of place here. We will suppose that an owner desires to obtain as long a season as possible, and yet wishes to escape from cold and bad weather as much as he can in this erratic climate of ours. Of recent years the weather has seldom proved reliable for yachting purposes until May has almost run her course; therefore fitting-out operations may be started at the beginning of that month, as a sailing yacht with her full complement of hands on board can usually be got ready for a summer's work in about three weeks. The cost of fitting-out is difficult to estimate, but perhaps £1 to £1 5s. per ton would be about the amount expended on an average of years upon sailing yachts. Of course the crew's wages are not included; but we allow only for paint, varnish, anti-fouling composition (if used), brushes, scrapers, and sundry small repairs to the yacht's equipment.

Among the principal racing yachts that will probably be fitted-out, or are already being prepared for the coming season, may be named AILSA, Astrild, and Morning Star. The first-named is too well known to need a lengthy description here; it will therefore suffice to say that she was built by Messrs. A. and J. Inglis, of Glasgow, in 1895, from the designs of Mr. W. Fife, jun., for Mr. A. B. Walker, who raced her both at home and in the Mediterranean with no little success until 1898, when she became the property of her present owner, Mr. F. B. Jameson, who changed her rig from that of a cutter to a yawl, and last year on several occasions she succeeded in beating the up-to-date racing cutter Bona (Duc d'Abruzzi).

While Ailsa belongs to the largest class, ASTRILD comes in the next division, and is of 65ft. linear rating. She was also built by Messrs. Inglis, and was first launched in the spring of 1898 for a member of the firm, Mr. P. M. Inglis. She was designed by Mr. G. L. Watson, who has produced such fliers as Britannia, Meteor, and Bona. Astrild during the earlier part of last season experienced bad luck, and her copper caused her considerable trouble; but later on she proved to be very fast in light winds. Some very interesting racing may be expected between this yacht and the new 65-footer Eelin, which has been constructed this winter at Southampton for Captain J. Orr-Ewing.



West and Son,

AILSA.

Southsea.

MORNING STAR is classed in the division next below Astrild, and is therefore a 52-footer. She was built in 1897 by Messrs. W. Fife and Son from designs of Mr. W. Fife, jun., for Mr. A. Coats, and during her first season won many prizes. Last year she was bought by Mr. F. W. L. Popham, and was dismantled during the early Thames matches. She was subsequently raced on a few occasions, but the alterations she had undergone seemed to have diminished instead of increased her speed. She has recently been repurchased by her original owner. SEAMEW.



PROFITABLE DOG-KEEPING.

HAVING arranged for the accommodation of his dogs, the next step will be for the beginner to acquaint himself with the best methods of feeding and managing the animals, so that they may do justice both to their owner and themselves.

First, as regards dietary, it may at once be stated that one meal a day is enough for an ordinary-sized healthy dog under almost any circumstances. It is best that this should be given at night, but if another must be served, let it take the form of breakfast, and be as light as possible. Of course sickly, delicate, or very small dogs whose constitutions are weak, benefit by a third meal, but overfeeding sows the seeds of sickness in many a kennel. The food should be wholesome and of the best quality procurable; cheap biscuits or meal and putrid meat are abominations to give a dog, as the former, being composed of husks, do not nourish, whilst the latter is certain to disarrange his stomach. Therefore whatever he is given to eat should be of the best, which, moreover,

is by far the cheapest in the end, as it goes further and builds up the animal's strength. Nor should it be forgotten that variety of diet is as good for a dog as it is for the human race, and consequently, as too much meat is not recommended, the careful owner will have to ring the changes as regards the staple diet of his favourites between oatmeal and Spratt's biscuits. It is not always easy, however, to get dogs to eat the former, but very few members of the canine race, assuming that they are healthy, will persist in refusing their food for long; and, if boiled up with the broth of sheep's or bullocks' heads, to which a little of the flesh and some green vegetables have been added, even the despised porridge will be greedily devoured in time.

Too much importance cannot be attached to the question of green vegetables as a part food for dogs, but potatoes and rice cannot be recommended, for reasons which it is unnecessary to enter into here. Unfortunately, however, in establishments

where there is no regular attendant whose business it is to look after the dogs, it is not always convenient to do the necessary cooking for the kennel, and in such cases the utility of Spratt's biscuits, which contain beetroot and meat in various proportions, is proved. Dogs are rather capricious on the subject of biscuits, some preferring them dry and others steeped in broth, but they should be compelled to eat both, as this adds to the variety of the kennel menu. An occasional meal of raw flesh forms a welcome and judicious change, and every now and then a dog may be given a large bone to gnaw, as this cleanses the teeth and promotes the secretion of saliva, which assists digestion.

Opinions differ upon the question of watering dogs, some breeders thinking that they should be given the opportunity of drinking only at regular intervals, whilst others contend that a vessel containing pure water should be always within their reach. If the latter is the case, it is quite certain that the dogs will consume a very great deal more fluid than they would do otherwise; and it may be added that many greyhounds in training, which are largely fed on sloppy food, will often refuse water altogether. The owner must, therefore, decide the matter of providing drink for his dogs as he likes; but as few amateurs will be able to wait upon their dogs if they have business to attend to, it is preferable for them to see that the troughs are filled with clean water before they leave home in the morning, whilst during the summer months means should be taken to ensure the drinking vessels being kept in the shade all day, and out of the reach of the rays of the sun, as otherwise intestinal troubles are certain to ensue.

The next point in connection with profitable dog-keeping that demands attention is the important question of exercise, without which no animal will remain for long in health. Here the troubles of many amateur owners begin in earnest, but the matter is not one that can be overlooked. Young dogs in particular should be given as much liberty as possible in a yard or paddock, but it is desirable that there should be road exercise as well, in order that the animals may get over their juvenile shyness, whilst the road assists in hardening their feet and keeps the latter in shape. The larger breeds, such as St. Bernards and mastiffs, are very apt to become weak at the ankles and hocks, with disastrous results so far as their future excellence is concerned, and there is no better remedy for combating this evil than long steady walks upon the roads; but it is not necessary or, in fact, desirable that this exercise should be of a violent nature. In the case of terriers, however, the more romping they get the better, as they are of more active builds than the big dogs.

A great deal of difficulty is often experienced by owners in getting their dogs to follow them steadily in the streets, and, as thrashing the offender is generally a perfectly ineffective remedy, the best way to attempt to accomplish his reformation is by subjecting him to the following treatment: Procure a strong but thin cord—a stout blind-line will suffice for most dogs—about 20yds. long, and having made a running noose at one end, slip it round the animal's neck, holding the coil lightly in your hand, whilst the other end is fastened to your wrist. Keep him at heel by word of command, and if he bolts try to get him to stop his flight by calling to him. If he obeys, caress him, but should he be disobedient, he will find himself pulled up with a jerk when he gets to the end of the line; and, as the slip-noose will tighten round his throat, he will become half-suffocated if he is tearing off at full speed. Let him lie for a few seconds, then loosen the noose and rate him for bolting, but do not thrash him. Give him every opportunity for connecting his flight with the unpleasantness of being nearly strangled, and when, after a few lessons, he gets this into his head, the dog will generally have learned that it is better for him to keep at heel.

All valuable dogs require regular grooming with a properly-constructed brush, as if this most necessary operation is neglected, the coats are apt to become scurfy, and, in the case of the long-haired varieties, matted; then a comb has to be used, which is always a bad thing for dogs' jackets, as it irritates the skin, and is very often the cause of the hair coming out in patches. If a dog is too frequently washed in hot water, or if soap is regularly used, the coat is apt to become soft to the touch; but a bath for outdoor dogs can usually be arranged for by giving them a swim in a clean pond or stream. It is, however, a mistake to wash collies and such varieties within three or four days of a show, as their coats are sure to become soft in consequence; the better method, therefore, is to rub some dry flour, which has been previously well baked in an oven, well into their jackets, and then to brush it out. It is remarkable how much dirt this process will remove from the coats, and it will have the effect of causing the white markings to appear quite clean. When a dog has to be washed, a glove should always be used for the purpose of rubbing the soap well into the skin, as it must be borne in mind that most canine coats are pretty dense, and it is therefore not an easy matter to get through them. A final swill in tepid water should always be given, and in hot weather the stronger varieties may be treated to a cold douche, which will assist in preventing them taking cold.

(To be continued.)

SOME ANCIENT REFECTORIES.



BEAULIEU FROM THE ABBEY.

DINNER has always been the chief domestic event of the day in England, whether ancient or modern. Naturally a good deal of importance has attached to the dining-room. It is convenient as well as pleasant for the company in the house to dine together, even if it be only a monastery or a barrack, and the greatest social hardship of a prison is that

the inmates have to eat their meals alone. The result of which is that even in the very rough times in which castles and monasteries flourished there was always a tendency to make the dining-room the best in the building. This was overdone, for so popular was the room where people dined that they had almost no other, and the whole house spent what idle time they had

sitting on the benches in the dining-hall.

In the monasteries people were kept much too busy to be sitting over the hall fire mending arrows or drinking beer. But in any case the refectory was always the largest room in the building, and it naturally made the most imposing chamber when the monastery was converted into a palatial dwelling-house. The abbey church was designed with a single eye to be the dwellings of a holy brotherhood, and for the special duties of such a community. It was therefore most difficult to use the buildings as they stood for the ordinary purposes of even a very rich noble.

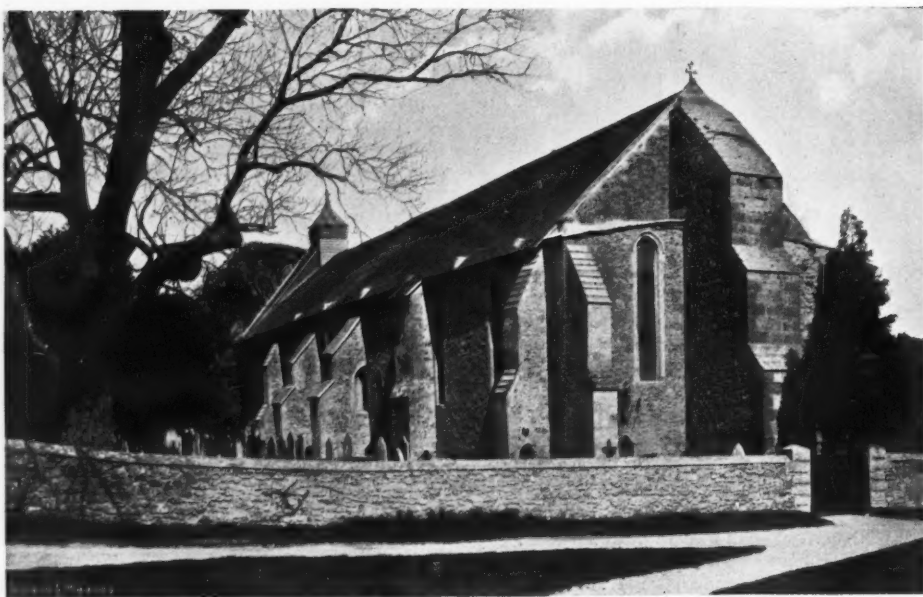
The abbey church was always quite useless for secular purposes, though the King did not hesitate for a moment to profane these buildings. Consequently they were commonly pulled to pieces for building material, or partly dismantled and left in ruins. Sometimes a bit was kept as a church, and the rest left to go to ruin, as at Bolton Abbey, in Yorkshire. At Beaulieu, in the New Forest, every stone of the abbey church was used to build forts on the shores of the Solent, and the lead to make roofs for Calshot Castle and Hurst Castle. The next thing was to make some use of the rest of the monks' buildings, which were very fine and ample. All the rows of cells were useless, so they were pulled down. This has, I think, been done in nearly every case elsewhere. Then at Beaulieu, and at very

built, and often resembled the great tithe barns of which we have given several examples in

COUNTRY LIFE. The remaining building was the refectory, where generations of monks had feasted at Easter and fasted in Lent, though it is to the credit of the monks that as a rule the feasts were seldom more than a full meal, as contrasted with the stinted fare of vegetables and bread of the days of self-denial.

In the smaller religious houses the refectory was of modest dimensions in proportion to the number of inmates. When these priories, or small monasteries, were confiscated they were converted to ordinary use far more easily than the large establishments. The apartments were far closer together than in the great monasteries, and the refectory became the dining-hall of the mansion, and the chapel was either retained for religious uses or turned into a room. This appears to have taken place in the refectory at Bisham

Abbey, on the Thames. It is now the hall, above which the old open-work timber roof is still seen. But in the largest monasteries the refectories were of great size, chambers corresponding in all respects to the great hall of castles and palaces, and, though far more modestly fitted, of design and proportions quite equal to those in the houses of the nobles. Numbers of these halls, and a few of the refectories, still survive. All were very much alike in their general plan, and formed the centre of any



Poullton.

BEAULIEU REFECTORY, NOW THE CHURCH.

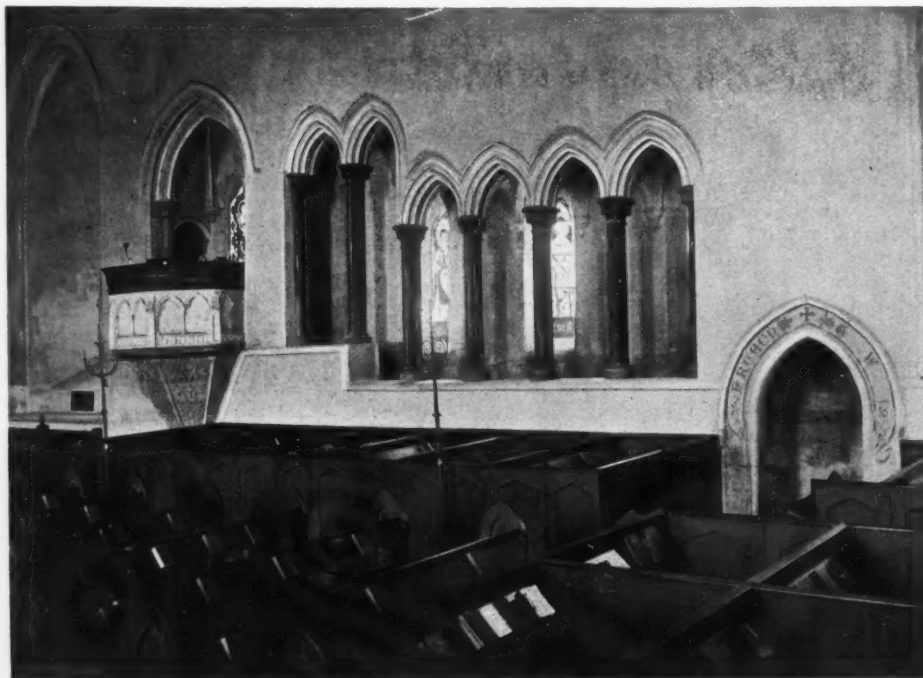
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REFECTORY DOOR.

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INTERIOR WITH PULPIT.

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social life there was, whether in abbey, college, or castle. In the latter the hall was inhabited all day long, the whole establishment taking their different meals there, the family at the high table and the servants at others. Most of the college halls of Oxford and Cambridge are little different from the monastic refectories, though there were certain points of difference. Westminster Hall, the London Guildhall, though much altered, and the hall of Westminster School, are all good examples. The chamber was always one room, with an open wooden roof. At one end was the dais, and always in the centre was a huge rectangular brazier or stone fire-hearth, on which a fire of wood burned all day and smouldered all night. Above it, in the middle of the roof, was a louvre or lantern, often decorated outside like a miniature spire, for the smoke to escape from. It was round this fire in the Guildhall that Sir Richard Whittington and his Royal guests stood after the feast which was given to celebrate Agincourt, when the Lord Mayor brought the King's bonds for £60,000 and burnt them before the assembled company as his subscription to the expenses of the war.

But the hall generally had two features which the refectory had not. The hall had at the end or side next the dais a minstrels' gallery. No such musical accompaniment was permitted to the monks' frugal meal. But they were permitted, and sometimes commanded, to listen to the reading of edifying books. So instead of a minstrels' gallery there was often a kind of pulpit in the refectory. This may be seen in the ancient refectory of Beaulieu Abbey. The lords of Beaulieu took the hint, and as the abbey church was pulled down converted the refectory into the parish church, where the very fine ancient pulpit is used to preach from. This refectory was probably built in the reign of Henry III., who completed, or aided to complete, with great splendour the buildings which his father, King John, in his one fit of piety had endowed. The furniture of the refectory was very rude and simple, simpler even than that of a college hall at Oxford. In the latter are fixed and handsome tables, fine pictures, and sometimes tapestry. The halls of the nobles were also partly hung with tapestry. But in the refectories the tables were, in early days, not fixtures. Trestles were brought in and boards laid across them for each meal. The benches must have been left; but the monks were seldom allowed to sit together after meals.

Halls were doubtless capital places for a feast, but rather depressing places for a quiet family dinner. For a big feast



H. W. Taunt. HURLEY: THE REFECTORY FROM THE RIVER.

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they served just as the modern hall of a City company does now, with an immense air space above which kept the room ventilated, and gave ample room for a great number of guests. But it must have been quite another thing when my lord and his lady and their family sat down in that huge and darkling room, with all the company candles unlighted and with nothing except the conversation of the servants, eating at the lower table, or talking round the fire, to take their thoughts away from the draughts and chill of the big chamber. They did, in fact, soon take to slipping off and dining in a private room, a new fashion which was a grievance dwelt upon by the old satirists. The monks had an advantage over the nobles and squires in their big halls. The room was always full of diners, if the dinner was coarse and sometimes scanty.

I believe the stories of the monks' high living and feasting are libels. I have looked through the invoices of stores kept in their ample store-houses, and all the food is of the plainest kind—quantities of herrings and stock fish (nasty salt cod, which they sent as far as Iceland to get), bacon, salt beef, pease-meal—always coarse stuff, for pease-pudding—rye, for black bread, and lard. The luxuries of the time were spices, which entered into every well-cooked dish, and I do not observe spices mentioned in the list I have read, nor any notes of venison, or pheasants, or capons, or all the agreeable menu Walter Scott regales his abbots on. But the abbot had to entertain wealthy travellers, knights, nobles, and princes, who sponged on them in the most outrageous way, and, I have no doubt, grumbled when the dinner was not a great deal better than they got at home.

Consequently, I fancy "high table" was really well supplied. Not so the monks' board. However, here is the contents of a rather better larder than usual, in the year 1311. It contained the carcasses of twenty oxen, of fifteen pigs, of herrings eight thousand, of dog-granes (? dog-fish) seven score, twenty pounds of almonds (these were certainly a luxury, but there were no raisins), thirty pounds of rice, six barrels of lard, enough oatmeal to last till Easter, two quarters of salt. The six barrels of lard were for potting down the beef in barrels, just as we put melted fat over potted meat to keep it. This made much less salt necessary, and saved scurvy. The pig-sty was important, because it yielded lard for this business. Note that there was no wheat, and the main food was clearly oatmeal porridge. They brewed beer regularly, and all rations not eaten in the refectory were given out from the buttery, exactly as is done in an Oxford college now.

The REFECTORY DOOR at Beaulieu, now the church door, originally led out of the cloisters. Close by was a stream of water laid on in a conduit brought from the hill above



H. W. Taunt.

BISHAM: THE HALL.

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for the monks to wash their hands in before meals. In some places fine lead cisterns used for this purpose still remain. There is a beautiful example at Battle Hall, in Sussex. At Beaulieu the cistern is gone, but the conduit still remains, and I believe that the water is still brought for the use of Beaulieu from the old source.

I imagine that in the Beaulieu dining-hall the monks fared better than those at other places, so rich were the natural resources of the place. That they made great quantities of wine is certain, for the wine-house is of very great size. They

may have sold this, and shipped it from the quay opposite, which they called Cheapside. But I doubt this, as any quantity of good French wine came over cheap in those days when we held Guienne and Gascony. Consequently it is probable that the monks drank it themselves. So with wine in place of small beer, salmon and trout from the river at their doors, instead of stock fish on Fridays, and the innumerable pigs that fed in the forest, giving well-flavoured and wholesome meat, even the least of the brethren must have had a good time.

C. J. CORNISH.



WHILE man is certainly, so far as we know, the only creature that catches fish for recreation, and without any intention of a meal, it is interesting to notice that his methods of fishing, whether for sport or the pot, are but crude imitations for the most part of the ways of beasts and birds that subsisted on fish for ages before the trawl and trammel, the long line and graining, came to increase the difficulties of the struggle for existence in the deep waters. It is surprising, when we consider the conditions of their existence, that fish should be the natural food, habitually or on occasion, of so many animals in every class. Mammals, birds, reptiles, fishes, crustaceans, and molluscs, not to mention a number of still lower orders, feast on these creatures, and employ various means to satisfy their appetite for this form of food. To obtain some notion of the variety of fish-eaters, we have only to bracket on this footing such examples as man, the mole, the rat, the Polar bear, the seal, the pig, and the porpoise; the crow, blackbird, dipper, kingfisher, gannet, and puffin; crocodile and ringed snake, crab, octopus, and water-beetle. Here are so-called



CORMORANT.

insitivora and rodents and ungulates, supposed to restrict their menu to insect and vegetable food, sharing this partiality for fish. The half-dozen representative birds are selected from hundreds. The number of reptiles might have been trebled. The examples drawn from the vast invertebrate realm are not a tithe of those that prey on fish. The fondness of cats, both wild and tame, for fish, as well as the corresponding prejudice observed in dogs—the Esquimaux breed alone taking kindly to this food—have not escaped the notice of naturalists; and there are many instances on record of domestic cats overcoming their dislike of wetting their persons in the absorbing chase of gold fish or minnows in some shallow tank within their reach.

As might be expected, fish themselves are the largest consumers of their fellows. The opportunities afforded to the larger predatory kinds of feeding on the smaller, more particularly on those in which the gregarious habit offers facilities for a full meal with little exertion, are endless. Some, as the pollack and mackerel, or, on a larger scale, the bonito and barracouta, trust to their superior speed, and boldly pursue their prey at the surface, often affording, all unconsciously, a very beautiful spectacle to naturalists prowling over the bows of ocean vessels, and a welcome meal to frigate birds and other fowl awaiting the frightened launce or flying-fish that leap from the surface. The unerring skill with which these aerial robbers wait on the movements of the shoals below, following every manœuvre of their co-operators beneath, doubling as they double and turning as they turn, must be seen to be appreciated. In describing these matters of Nature it is easy to pile epithet on epithet, but it is not possible to give more than a very poor idea of the reality. Needless to say, these phenomena are hopelessly exaggerated in books, more particularly in the pictorial department. No account is taken of the failures, nor would the stay-at-home reader picture a vessel steaming or sailing through tropical seas without an attendant band of frigate and tropic birds on either quarter, darting with unceasing energy and unerring eye on the flying-fish that escape the snap of bonito jaws seen beneath. As a matter of fact, particularly in these days of steam, one or two such episodes in a voyage lasting over weeks may be entered in the wanderer's diary with gratitude. Also it is a case of "eyes and no eyes," and the man who spends the day in the card-room, or initiating ladies on the quarter-deck into the mysteries of quoits and bull-board, is not likely to have the wonders of Nature brought to his notice.

The part played by the "rod" of the angler, or by the similarly-used filaments on the head of the star-gazer, is, there is some reason to suppose, less important than some of the older writers would have us believe; but these, unquestionably, act to some extent as attractions, and the comparison with the fisherman's bait was not unnatural. The dory stalks its sand-eels and mackerel-midge in a wonderful manner, approaching them "end on" until, within twice its own length, it makes a rush and sinks slowly out of sight with a great mouthful of small fish. This I have repeatedly noticed on still days beneath the pier at Bournemouth; but the operation should be witnessed in a tank, where the chief actor is on a level with the observer's eye, to be thoroughly enjoyed. All these fish that stalk their quarry are, it will be remarked, slow in their movements, and the same may be said of the electric eel and the torpedo ray, both of which employ natural batteries to stun their victims before swallowing them whole, after the fashion of almost all fish. Nor is this playing up to the curiosity which fish possess, in common with the squid and cuttle, to a degree often fatal to themselves, restricted to the angler-fish, for the luminous lamp-fish of the deep seas turns to account the attractiveness of its luminous spots; and, coming for a moment to a mammal, the sperm-whale is said, on excellent authority, to open its vast jaws and display its white teeth for the edification of the squid, on which it loves to feed.

A somewhat similar case of attraction brings me to the realm of birds, which are, after the fish themselves, and, perhaps, the

octopus, the most devoted fish-eaters in Nature. I refer to the attractive oil said to exude from the heron's foot, which has not, however, received confirmation from scientific observers. The heron and kingfisher, motionless beside their favourite shallows, represent the concentrated virtues of the fisherman. The former, though capable of great speeds at almost any altitude within human vision, is content to stand like a statue till day passes into darkness, with perhaps one or two small eels as guerdon. The gorgeous kingfisher, strange contrast to most of our resident birds, perches with equal determination on some overhanging branch, or anon, when conditions are favourable, skims the surface like some fish-hawk. Few birds have been handled with greater liberty by the poets. It is *not* a vegetarian; *not* a sea-bird; *not* migratory.

Very different is the method employed by the dashing osprey and fish-owl, which, more like that grand diver the gannet, swoop on their prey from a height, and rarely miss the target of their flight. Too often is the osprey harried by the robber fish-eagle, just as the skua, pirate of either hemisphere, pounces on the more cowardly gull, and makes it disgorge its fish or other meal.

The gannet is a stupid bird. Pot-hunters may shoot one after another, and may take half-a-dozen shots at one until it is struck, which, as the distance precludes the use of anything but a rifle, is not always simple. Or it may be killed by fastening a herring to a board, against which the unfortunate fisher knocks itself lifeless in its endeavour to pouch the fish.

In direct contrast to these birds of the air come the diving kinds, like the cormorant and puffin, all endowed with toothed, or,

habitual fish-feeders, cases have not been wanting in which the mole, that valiant enemy of the wire-worm and other noxious insects, has been seen to regale itself on the fry of different fish, and an instance is even on record in which a swimming mole was captured in a landing-net, and placed in the boat with some newly-caught fish, which it forthwith devoured.

Closely allied to the moles and shrews, and equally described and classed as an insectivorous animal, is a creature without any English name, found on the West Coast of Africa, which lives in the water, and subsists almost entirely on fish. Of fish-eating cats, mention has already been made, and the most active in this respect is the fishing-cat of the East Indies, which is seen to capture its prey with great dexterity, and apparently without objection to immersion in the water. There are also other carnivorous animals of the same region, more nearly related to the civets, that feed almost entirely on fish. The antipathy of dogs, with the exception of the Esquimaux race, to this food has already been noticed; but in the bears we come to a practised fisher in the Polar species, which is said to lie in wait for its victims at the ice-holes, and even to capture them in fair chase.

To the same family as the otter belong those scarcely less agile fishers, the mink and sable. There are not many fish-eaters among the ungulate order, but even here we have the pig, which eats, indeed, almost anything, and there was at one time a rumour, since disproved, of cows eating salmon. Among rodents, which are popularly regarded as vegetarians only, we have the almost omnivorous rat, as well as the North American musquash and allied species in South America, particularly devoted to this food. And, coming to the lowest, the Australian platypus, that grotesque puzzle of three generations of zoologists, certainly consumes the spawn, if not also the fry, of the trout introduced to the colonies from New Zealand hatcheries.

It is not, perhaps, necessary further to prolong these few notes on the fish-eaters. Their methods are as various as themselves. While the majority course their prey by sheer force of speed, many lie in ambush like the angler-fish and dory, while others thrash the waters with their tail, and kill the fish in quantity, to consume them at leisure. Of such are the powerful thresher-shark and several of the crocodile kind. I have many a time watched the thresher-shark laying about him with his powerful tail, much to the prejudice of Cornish pilchards, and I have also noticed, in the

same waters, the very interesting method in which the grampus rounds up the shoals, after the fashion of drivers, and, when they are sufficiently solid, rushes through them open-mouthed, and sinks to the bottom to digest. The roar made by the huge cetacean as it charges the serried ranks of unfortunate fish is like in sound to a torpedo-boat passing close by you at five-and-twenty knots.

Yet at the head of all enemies of fish-life man stands unequalled. His nets and hooks and other devices have, indeed, worked to such purpose that he is now confronted with the immediate necessity of replenishing the supplies, which, though vast, have at length begun to show evidences of his greed. And not alone, as I said before, does he destroy fish wholesale for market purposes, not alone does he waste ten times as much as he consumes, but he even sacrifices vast quantities to his amusement.

Thus to the men and lads, not far short, perhaps of 100,000, employed in the United Kingdom alone in emptying the seas of their fish, must be added 4,000 or 5,000 salmon-fishers, 50,000 or 60,000 holders of trout licences, and probably another 50,000 distinct coarse-fishers; and all this before the number of fishermen in one corner of one continent alone can be even dimly appreciated. Truly, were not fish a most fertile and long-suffering race, they had ere now become extinct. And, on the other hand, were their foes much fewer or much less active, they had, perhaps, ere this so multiplied as to impede the navigation of the ocean highway. Man is not, then, wholly the disturber of Nature's balance that some would have us believe.



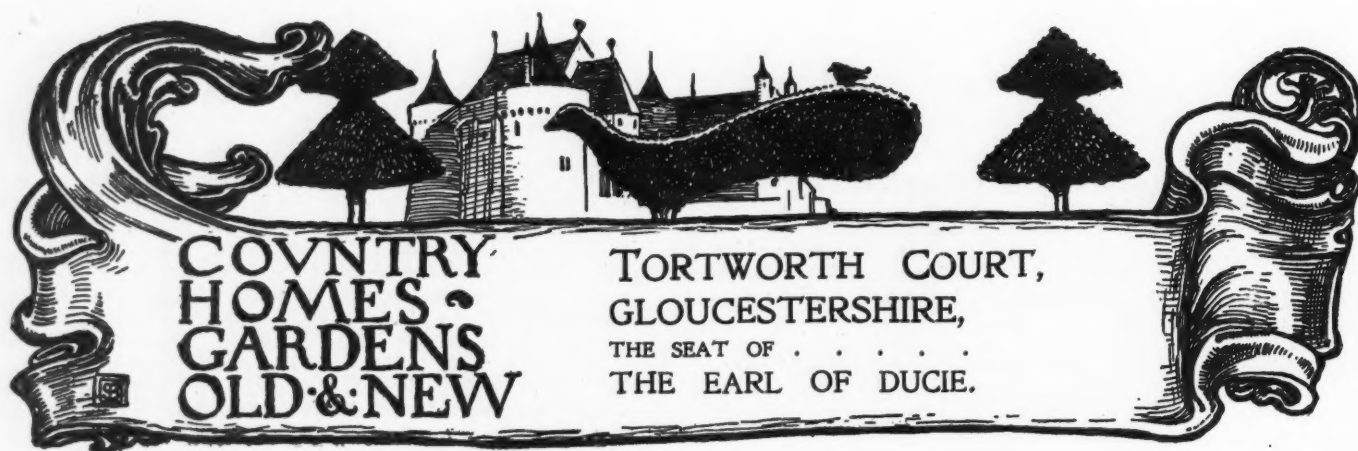
J. Munro.

THE ROD OF THE ANGLER.

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at any rate, notched bills, that enable them to retain their slippery prey, as well as with the power of using their wings and webbed feet to prodigious purpose in the chase beneath the waters. The nostrils of the gannet are so buried in the skin that the bird can fearlessly strike the surface without inconvenience. As for its eyes, I think it probable that these are closed at the moment of contact, which, if such be the case, speaks volumes for the accuracy of instinct and sense of direction that enables the diver to fall on the particular fish it has selected. Of course, where it flings itself haphazard in the thick of a shoal, the case is altered, and the blow of its body may very probably stun sufficient sand-eels or pilchards to satisfy it when it reaches the surface. The way I have, through the glasses, seen these birds laying about them with their bill after each dive convinces me that something of the kind transpires.

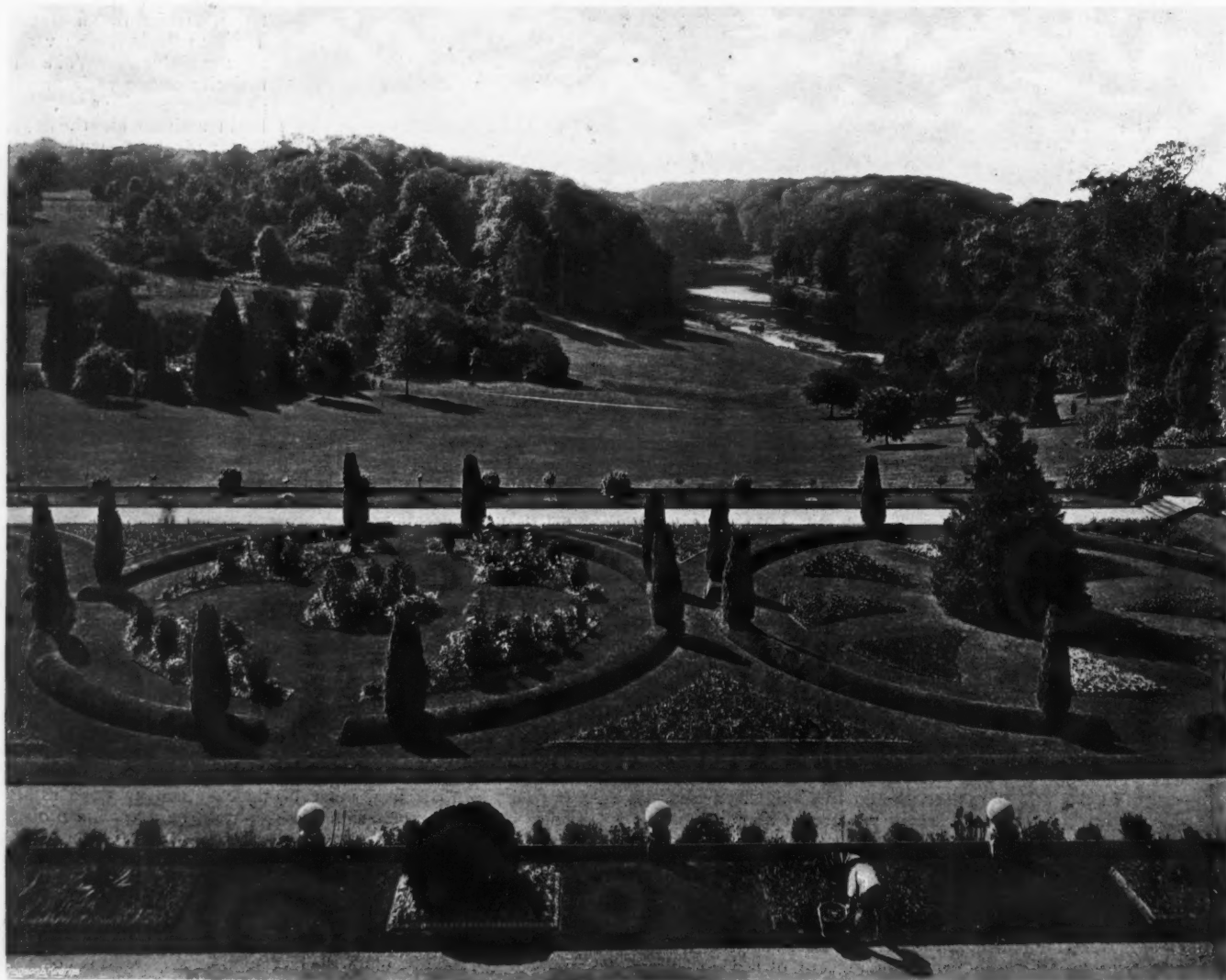
Nor, for all the difficulties in the majority of cases, are the mammals by any means badly represented in the list of enemies to fish. That the seal and otter, and many of the cetaceans, otherwise whales and porpoises, should live almost exclusively on this food, which they can easily procure in abundance, will not arouse any curiosity, and may, in fact, be overlooked. But there are, among the more casual fish-eaters, a number of beasts that, on account of both their difficulties and the other conditions of their existence, are of some interest in this connection. Of these, one or two have been named. Among the insectivora, which seemed to be named on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, we have several families of shrews, including our own water-shrew (not to be confounded with the much larger water-vole), as well as the continental desmans. Moreover, in addition to these



TORTWORTH COURT, in Gloucestershire, between the Cotswold Hills and the Severn, is one of those places which unite in themselves both the old and the new. Here is a tree that some of robust faith will carry back to the days of Egbert, but that truly appears to have been a boundary-mark in the time of Stephen, and is written of in the reign of John, standing by a house that bears the aspect of the Tudor age, though it is a creation of the present century, with gardens that have here a Dutch quaintness, with fine clipped hedges and trees, there the wide landscape features associated with later times, and elsewhere the radiant flower-beds that unmistakably belong to these. It is a fine country, and the house is superbly situated, with an entrancing prospect of wood and lake, and surroundings of great picturesqueness and beauty. Geologists will tell us that much of the varied charm of this region is due to broken stratification, to the contorted beds, which, as some even aver, have given the place its name. However this may be, there is no gainsaying that it is a land of much loveliness, lying favourably between the hills and a noble arm of the sea.

Anciently the place belonged to the Throckmortons, from whom it was purchased by Sir Robert Ducie, Lord Mayor of London, and a man of substance and worth in Stuart times, who lent much to Charles I. The Baronet's grandson was created Viscount Downe, and his niece carried Tortworth to the family of her husband, Edward Moreton, Esq. Her son became Baron Ducie in 1720, and a special remainder carried the title, with the estate, to the second Baron's nephew, Francis Reynolds, from whom the descent has been direct, with adoption of the name of Moreton and the added honour, in 1837, of an Earldom.

The older house at Tortworth gave place to the present imposing structure of stone, designed by Mr. Teulon, between the years 1848 and 1853. The illustrations reveal its character sufficiently well, and they indicate how beautiful are its surroundings. With the word "Welcome" to greet us upon the splendid gate-house, we are soon introduced to one of the finest gardens in Gloucestershire. The Earl of Ducie is an enthusiastic lover of the garden, and the pleasure grounds and woodlands bear unmistakable evidences of his care. The very





"COUNTRY LIFE."

GARDENS OLD AND NEW.—TORTWORTH COURT FROM THE LAKE.

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THE SOUTH GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

fine situation of the mansion, crowning a gentle slope, has made possible the formation of a broad terrace, with fine parterres and gorgeous groups of flowers, strengthened in character by shrubs and trees—a terrace overlooking a vale wherein sleeps the lake, embosomed in luxuriant woodland. Whether we look over the country from this position or gaze backward towards the house from the water, we have before us a prospect wholly satisfactory, both in the grouping of features and the subtle contrasting of colours. Everything betokens a love of arboriculture and horticulture, and the masses of trees, evergreen and deciduous, some of them being splendid specimens, and the dark hues of firs and conifers from other lands, contrasted with the tender greens of

native growths, give nobility and grandeur to the place, while the gay flowers are its adornment.

The undulating character of the land at Tortworth affords many aspects, and tender conifers can be placed in situations well suited to them. There are numberless varieties of them, and the collection is constantly being added to. Splendid beeches, lifting their pillar-like limbs far above the darker growths below, Spanish and edible chestnuts, and many other varieties of trees, are also there. Nothing seems to have been planted indiscriminately, and no part of Tortworth is without interesting trees and flowering and evergreen shrubs.

The flower garden is one of the most interesting in Gloucestershire. How finely it is placed our illustration shows. The view from that terrace, as we have said, is truly enchanting—the terrace with its bold beds of flowers; then the creeper-clad wall, where thrive many tender plants; then the flower garden proper, with its quaint formations and Irish yews; next the broad grassy slopes, upon which are noble groups of trees, and gentle verdant undulations descending to the lake below. The arrangement and view are very noteworthy, the whole having been well conceived with an open and simple character and corresponding effect. The lake, a beautiful sheet of water, with a margin partly flower-fringed, affords a suitable position for groups of hybrid water-lilies and other water flowers. A very interesting feature of the place—which is complete in every respect, and has a



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FROM THE LAWN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

noble conservatory, long ranges of glass houses, and fruit and vegetable gardens—is a nursery, so to speak, of trees and flowers, to supply the park and flower garden. Young oaks and other trees are here, and even *Araucaria imbricata*, the "Monkey Puzzle," of which there is a perfect specimen, has its birth upon the spot.

Near the church and the site of the older mansion is the famous chestnut tree, of which Loudon says: "Lord Ducie, the proprietor of the estate upon which it stands, had a portrait taken of it, from which an etching was made in 1772; and under it is the following inscription: 'The east view of the ancient chestnut tree at Tortworth, in the county of Gloucester, which measures 19yds. in circumference, and is mentioned by Sir Robert Atkins in his history of that county as a famous tree in King John's time, and by Mr. Evelyn, in his "Sylva," to have been so remarkable for magnitude in the reign of King Stephen (1135) as then to be called the Great Chestnut of Tortworth, from which it may reasonably be presumed to have been standing before the Conquest (1066).'" Sir Robert Atkins is of opinion that it was originally several trees, and Marshall thinks that it is two trees grown together.

Our picture of the Tortworth chestnut is from an etching by J. G. Strutt, in his "Sylva Britannica" (folio 1826). Strutt was a great tree lover, and his magnificent work preserves really grand portraits of famous trees. The surmise as to the composite character of the Tortworth tree seems to be correct, and the fact that it embodies later growth will account for its extraordinary vitality. The



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THE FORECOURT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

great age of the long-lived yew is due to this power of rejuvenescence and continued growth, though it is necessary to remark that the determination of the ages of trees, and the identification of those referred to in ancient documents, are matters of considerable difficulty. The venerable Tortworth chestnut is decayed on the west side. It bears a copper plate dated January 1st, 1880, recording the belief that it was then 690 years old, and the following appropriate verse:

"May man still guard thy venerable form
From the rude blast and the tempestuous storm;
Still mayst thou flourish thro' succeeding time,
And last, long last, the wonder of the clime."



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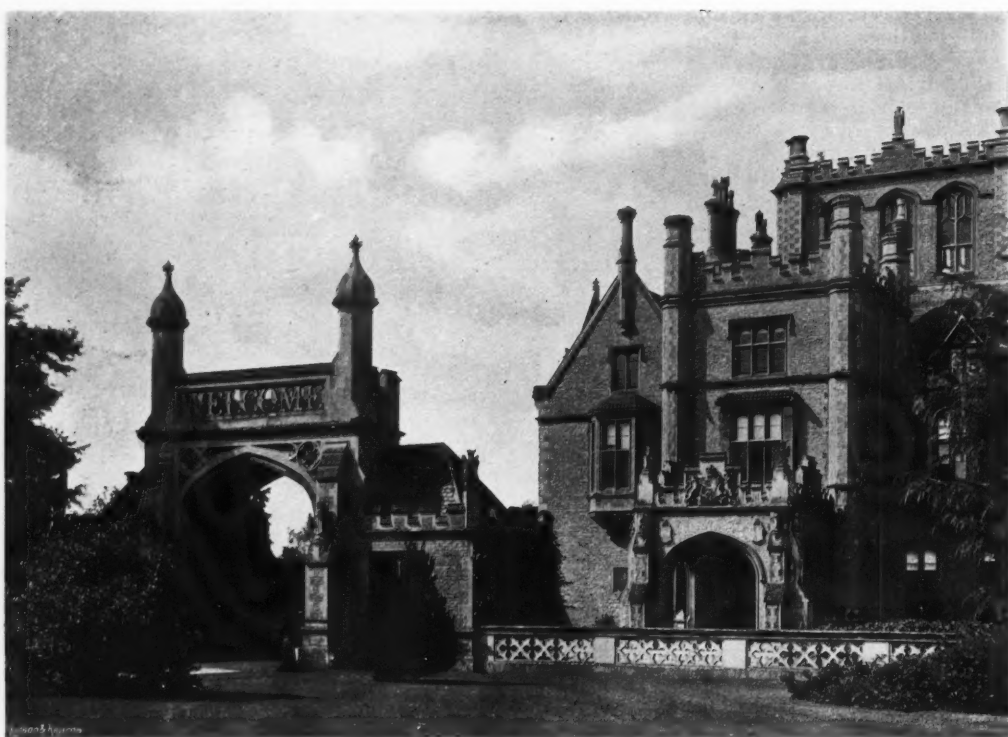
THE TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

It is a wish that all lovers of the country and the green-wood will re-echo, for what can be more impressive than a venerable tree, which, having withstood the blasts of centuries, and lifted its head unconquered by the storm, still bears upon its rugged boughs the glory that pleased our long-dead fathers—that wealth of immemorial green?

Books of the Day.

AFTER a slight pause in the publication of works calculated to appeal particularly to readers of *COUNTRY LIFE*, they have begun to appear again in goodly piles. First and foremost must be placed "The Book of Golf and Golfers" (Longmans and Co.), by Mr. Horace Hutchinson, an honoured contributor to these columns, and others, including Mr. H. H. Hilton and J. H. Taylor. It was his innate modesty, no doubt, that caused Mr. Hutchinson to refrain from italicising the "The," but the true enthusiast will not have read many pages before he will vote this latest to be quite the best treatise that has been given to the world on its somewhat serious subject. Not that Mr. Hutchinson writes solemnly; on the contrary, he permits himself quite as much skittishness as the mystery will bear. He even treats good-humouredly that ultra-profane but rather clever gibe about "Scotch croquet." Mr. Hutchinson's historical chapter is particularly well done. He accepts the theory of the Dutch origin of the game, and even the most patriotic Scot will find it hard to get away from the evidence of those tiles facing page 37. Equally uncontrovertible is his view that golf might have died a natural death, even in Scotland, but for the discovery of the gutta-percha ball, and that its revival dates from the formation of the North Devon and West of England Golf Club at Westward Ho! in 1864. Yet, he notes, "in 1890, when the first edition of the Badminton volume on golf was published, the publishers were in some doubt if the game was of sufficient importance to justify its being accorded a full volume to itself in that series." What a change the next eight years were destined to produce! From history we pass to a most informative chapter on "Golf as a Game" by Mr. Hilton, twice the winner of the open championship, and thence to J. H. Taylor's excellent discourse on "Approaching." The greater part of the volume is occupied by "A Portrait Gallery," for which Mr. Hutchinson is responsible, and which is illustrated by some capital photographs. We find it impossible to muster superlatives enough for the due praise of his skill in blending biography with technicalities, and in bringing out individuality of style in a phrase or two. A quotation will, perhaps, best illustrate our meaning; it is a comparison between two famous professionals. "Vardon's swing," says Mr. Hutchinson, "appears to me the acme of grace, Fernie's to combine, with scarcely less grace, a greater appearance of power. It is a more compact, more forceful movement." We



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THE GATE-HOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

may add that these sketches of Mr. Mure Fergusson, Andrew Kirkaldy, and other heroes, will be thought thoroughly readable by those who have never handled a club in their lives. Of the rest of "The Book of Golf and Golfers," it is enough to mention the interesting chapter on "Golf in the United States," by Mr. Whigham, a Scot by birth and golfing education, and Miss Pascoe's most able disquisition on ladies at the links. There are those who declare that they will never open a book on golf again, because it only makes them despair. But when they have recovered from that fit of morbid self-abasement, they must on no account omit to invest in Mr. Hutchinson's tome. "The Book," by the beard of "Old Tom" Morris!

The approach of the May-fly may or may not have prompted publishers to turn their attention to anglers. At any rate, two books on the gentle art lie before us, the first a revised edition of Mr. F. M. Halford's well-known "Dry-fly Fishing in Theory and Practice" (Vinton and Co.), in which he has been helped by that lovable man, the late George Selwyn Marryat, to whom the book is dedicated, Mr. W. H. Pope, and Mr. N. Lloyd. As a sound common-sense guide this handy and well-illustrated work is very hard to beat. Sir Edward Grey, in "Fly-fishing" (Dent and Co.), his contribution to "The Haddon Hall Library," which the Marquess of Granby and Mr. G. A. Dewar are editing, though the book is full of useful instruction, deals rather with the poetry and philosophy of the rod. We remarked just now that Mr. Horace Hutchinson could be read with pleasure by those who are absolutely ignorant of golf. Equally true is it that Sir Edward Grey can be appreciated by those who have

never thrown a fly. Its fine diction and delicate feeling raises it far above the ordinary sporting handbook. Especially charming are Sir Edward's "Memories of Early Days," of how, for instance, he caught his first three-pounder. "Never was a fish treated with more care and honour. It had swallowed the hooks, and rather than risk spoiling its appearance in getting them out, the gut was cut, and they were left inside. The small trout and eels and flounders were turned out of my basket and put into my companion's, so that the great sea-trout might lie in state." Even those sorry anglers whose fishing has never amounted to more than the capture of the evasive minnow with a worm on a crooked pin will rise to this ingenuous reminiscence of boyhood. We are sorry that Sir Edward Grey did not have good sport when, as a Winchester "man," he essayed the Itchen with a cast of three flies, but the fault must have been in his tools, not in himself, for he has the true fisherman's spirit, the delight not only in the actual joy of the chase, but in its surroundings. "The general impression of light and colour is not lost," he exclaims. "Some is noted at the time, and some sinks into the mind unconsciously, and is found there at the end of the day, like a blessing given by great bounty to one who is too careless at the time to deserve it." Therefore is it a pleasure to accompany him, whether he is standing by the pellucid chalk streams



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TORTWORTH COURT: THE GUN-ROOM.

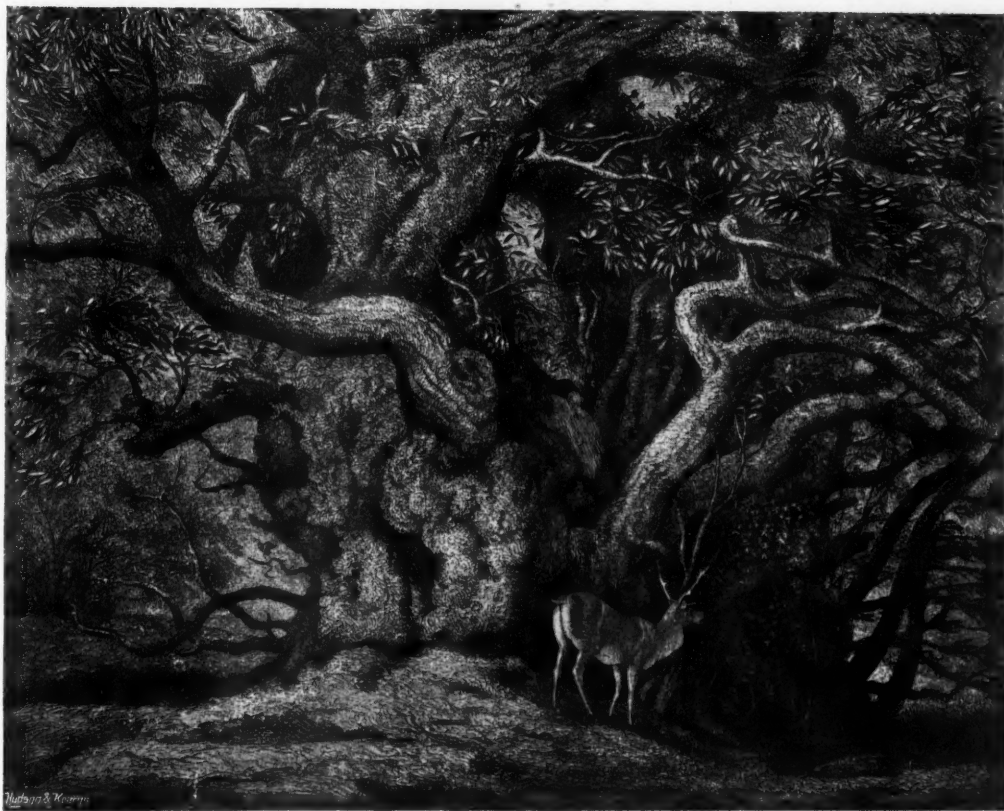
"COUNTRY LIFE."

of Hampshire, or by the "amber torrent" and "granite basin," as Clough saw them. Upon the great wet-fly v. dry-fly controversy, he pronounces that the former has more variety and interest, and is the only bait for the strong streams of the North, while he regards the dry-fly as correct for the lichen or the Test. We cannot enter into that mighty subject in this place. Enough that Sir Edward Grey has entirely justified his preference in pursuits, which is understood to be: (1) Fly-fishing; (2) tennis; (3) politics—so far as COUNTRY LIFE is concerned.

There are two ways of tackling a hateful historical character in a novel. The first is to accept all the legends that have collected round it for fact. The second consists in an attempt to reconstruct the man by the light of later experience. Mr. S. R. Crockett has chosen the former and easier course in dealing with Gilles de Retz, Marshal of France. As a result "The Black Douglas" (Smith and Elder), wherein the marshal stands for villain-in-chief, is packed full of horrors, which, somehow or other, are not particularly thrilling. Magic and Satan-worship, if sparingly employed, can be made impressive enough, but here they display their brimstone splutterings upon nearly every other page. Still, this is by no means a bad Crockett; not at all. It has the writer's besetting faults, the confounding of horse-play with humour, and an appalling lavishness in archaisms of speech. "Nay, I crave your pardon. I meant it not," is brave young Sholto's way of apologising to his sweetheart; and so forth, and so on.

On the other hand, the scene in which the Earl of Douglas and his little brother meet their deaths at the hands of a dastardly Scottish Court is instinct with a dignified restraint that one sometimes misses in Mr. Crockett. Again there is some stirring fighting, particularly a gruesome battle with were-wolves, and, granted the magic, the story moves to its end with a curious sense of fatefulness. Yes, quite a good Crockett.

Mr. Marshall Saunders's "Rose-à-Charlotte" (Methuen) resembles Mr. Crockett's tale in being partly French in interest, but it is the France of another age and another hemisphere. He introduces us to the present-day Acadiens by means of a young American, who, discovering that an ancestor of his had cruelly



THE TORTWORTH CHESTNUT.

done to death one of the poor hunted folk immortalised in Longfellow's "Evangeline," resolves to make atonement. Vesper Nimmo, therefore, journeys to the Sleeping Water Inn; there he makes the acquaintance of its charming landlady, Rose-à-Charlotte, and— But it would be unfair to summarise a story which relies, after all, not on its plot, but on its studies of primitive character as influenced by modern ideas. The recent awakening of the French Canadians is indicated with no common skill; and, though the various courtships move rather slowly, one does not expect the hurry-scurry of Chicago on the Bay Saint-Mary. "Rose-à-Charlotte," in short, has atmosphere—to use a hack phrase—and a kindly, balmy atmosphere it is.

CHRONICLES OF A ROOKERY.—II.

ON April 5th the first nestful of rooklings was hatched, on the 9th the second, and by the 19th there was a nursery in twenty-two out of the twenty-five nests. The three others were new nests belonging to later arrivals, who, though they found ready-built houses standing empty for their occupation, preferred to begin from the beginning and build their own homes.

Of course, we who walk about flat-footed on the ground can have only pedestrian ideas about rookeries. Looking at one from a distance, we see that the nests are clustered together, and that if we drew two parallel lines, only a very few feet apart, across the grove, the whole village would fall between them. None of the nests are built dangerously high or eccentrically low. Then if we come closer and, standing under the trees, look up, we see that, here and there, the nests are built as close together as the formation of the tree will permit, but that the majority are dotted about well clear of one another, and never, in any case, exactly one above the other. The spaces between the nests seem to our eyes to be filled with a maze of branches and twigs, and the whole top of the grove to be a close-set thicket. This, of course, is not the case, as, if you watch, you will see a rook launch itself from its nest-edge and make for its objective point without striking a twig on its way, and the expanse of a rook's wings is nearly 3ft. When chasing each other the birds may be seen flying the whole length and breadth of the grove, in its upper storeys, closing their wings here and dodging a sharp corner there, it is true, but still dashing along at a great pace, with as few obstacles to their flight, apparently, as a runaway pickpocket dodging the pursuing policeman in alleys and courts. And if it were possible for us to get up into the air and look down upon the settlement, we should find that there was no maze at all, but alleys and courts, and that each of the nests had its frontage to a right-o'-way or an open space, and that the principle of "ancient lights" was perfectly well understood, or, at any rate, acted upon, by the tenants of the trees.

Selection of a site for a new house, as in the case of our late arrivals, is not, therefore, all a matter of personal taste, nor

is joining an established rookery a go-as-you-please affair. There are "the proprieties" and "vested rights" to be observed; and I am very sure from what I have seen that many of the quarrels in a rookery, attributed by other writers to such sordid motives as the larcenous acquisition of each other's sticks and leaves, have really their origin in the neglect or outrage by newcomers of the fads and interests of the older residents, and not in thievishness. Why should rooks make common cause against a pair of birds, A and B, that are stealing the twigs of C and D? As a matter of fact they do not; but of this later. What they *do* make common cause against is, I fancy, the stoppage of a right-o'-way, or interference with frontages on a thoroughfare, or the obstruction of "ancient lights," or some other matter that affects the common comfort or welfare. But our new-comers selected their sites with judgment, or perhaps, being worldly-wise, they deferred to the judgment of the most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors, whom they found sitting on the edges of solid nests already equipped with eggs, in no mood for trifling with the humours of strangers, and, stonily critical, watching their first movements. It is a funny picture, this, that rises to the mind's eye, of the poor visitor-rooks (conscious of a shady record, probably, from their last rookery), hat in hand, in the presence of the regular residents, "hoping they don't intrude." Had they come with the first, there would have been no formal difficulties; they would have been welcome in the ordinary course like the rest. But at the very end of March, when everybody was comfortably settled, and all arrangements nicely made, well, it was a little awkward.

But they chose well. The residents did not interfere with them, and the nests, begun on the last day of March, were all three finished by April 10th. The manner of a rook's building is more interesting than that of other open-nested birds. At first the sticks accumulate very slowly, and both birds seem particularly careful about the laying of them. But the male soon tires of such serious work, and seldom again takes more than a perfunctory interest in the style of the growing domicile. All his thoughts make deplorably for flirtation, and instead of trying to inspire esteem by industry, he courts admiration for

personal charms; preferring to be thought a handsome rook rather than a good architect. He has no ambition for a reputation as a twig-layer or mud-plasterer, but lays himself out to draw his partner's attention to the depth to which he can bow without entirely losing his balance, and the width to which he can fan out his tail. The wife's cool indifference to all this coxcombry is immensely instructive and diverting, and when the male nearly chokes in an ecstasy of compliments, all she says is "stuff." Sometimes they both go down together into the paddock for materials, and while one bird is busily sorting out the kind of leaves she wants, and the bits of muddy-rooted turf she thinks best, the other is playing indescribable antics, the acme being reached when he flattens himself out like an empty rook's skin, and begins "swimming" with his wings along the grass. By this time his mate has got her beak quite full, and without any sort of remark, she quietly flies off, leaving her paralytic spouse to find out that she has gone when he recovers his senses. It is very funny then to see him grab up the first morsel of anything that comes to his beak, and fly home with it wearily, as if he were working himself to death. At other times the male alone goes off for material, handing it over on his return to the hen, who always receives his contributions with growlings, and tucks them into place with grumbings. These sounds are among the most frequent in a rookery in the early stages of building, and always puzzle the listener who is unaware of their cause. The explanation is a very human one, being nothing more nor less than the hen's protest against the frivolity of her spouse, who, having brought her a beakful of materials, immediately suggests "adjourning from labour to refreshment." But the hen is in deadly earnest; she has got to have a nest completed in time for the reception of her eggs, and all invitations to giddiness are rejected by her in tones like the growling of a cat. The same sound intensified, and accompanied by violent flappings of wings,

means that two birds are fighting, nine times out of ten the result of the male bird coming home and finding another of his sex showing off his personal attractions and accomplishments to his wife. Immoderate flirtation is the rook's particular weakness, and jealousy the chief disturbing emotion of the rookery.

When the foundation of the nest has become sufficiently solid—both birds do a great deal of walking about upon it—the sides are constructed by weaving living twigs (larch and birch are, in a nest lying now before me, almost exclusively used) into the ends sticking out all round from the foundation. A circular wicker rim, with rather large interstices and loose-looking, is thus built up to the height of several inches, and the hen then begins thickening and strengthening it from the bottom. As soon as she has filled up, say, two inches from the floor, so as

to make the side quite impervious to draught or light, she adds a little to the height of the upper wicker rim, so that when she is at work within the nest she can command an all-round view of her surroundings. In this way, thickening bit by bit at the bottom, and adding bit by bit to the top, she completes the structure, and when it is finished to her taste she still has a rim of light lattice-work through which, when sitting on her eggs,

she can see all that is going on by merely lifting up her head, and keeps open for herself a view of the sky on all sides, so that she can never be taken by surprise. The suddenness with which, being warned beforehand of the approach of a suspicious character, she hurtles out of her nest on the offensive, completely "metagrobolises" the intruder, who comes up quite unprepared for such precipitate tactics, and finds himself furiously attacked without any preliminaries of hostility. Again, the hen bird, sitting in her nest behind her "purdah," so to speak, can descry afar off her returning mate, and it is almost incredible at what distance she will single out and recognise her own food-supplier from all the other birds coming up with provisions to the rookery. For as soon as the nest is complete the hen rarely leaves it (sitting in it, I believe, before there are eggs), and the male then takes upon

himself the duty of feeding her. Sometimes she goes out to the field to him, and is there fed by him, and spectators of the act go home saying that they "saw a mother rook feeding a young one as big as herself." But as a rule he brings the supplies home, and the guggle-uggle-uggle of the mother being fed by the father, always mistaken by the uninitiated for the feeding of the young by the parents, is one of the most familiar of the tree-top utterances.

In ten days from the beginning of the nest the hen has generally begun to lay, and it is very easy, watching her manner when getting into her nest, to see if she has eggs or not. Her

entry is very careful, and she moves the eggs about with her beak before settling on them. Her exit, however, is just as impetuous and headlong after her eggs are laid as when her nest is empty; and therefore when she settles on her eggs she must take a purchase with her feet on the wall of the nest on either side, so that when she has to rise on a sudden alarm she does so precipitately and with a spring or "send off."

When the young are hatched their voices are like those of



R. B. Lodge. CLIMBING TO ROOK'S NEST.

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A COLONY.

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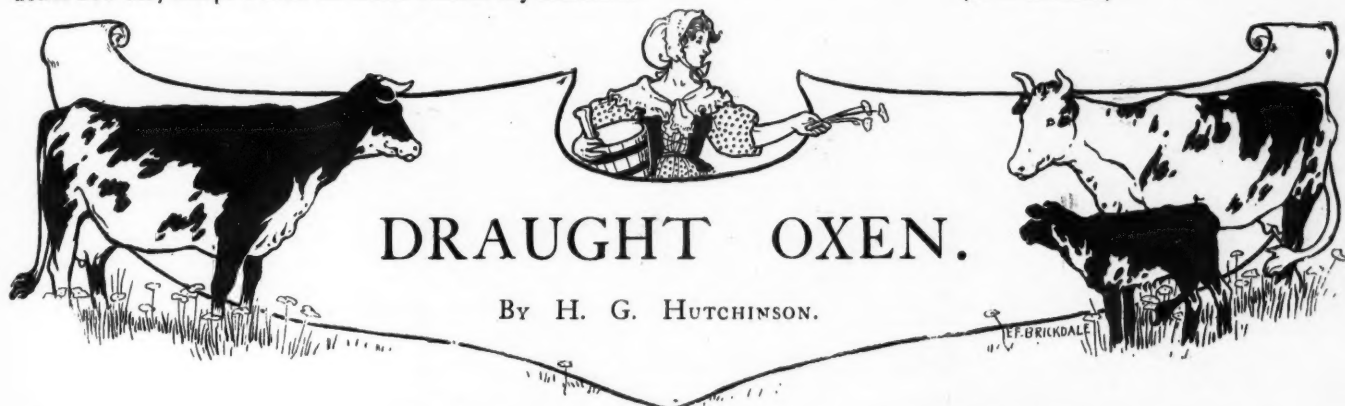
magnified sparrows, but at the end of a week they strengthen to that of a jackdaw, and even at that early age it is easy to distinguish between the sexes of the nestlings by the tone. Up to this time—the period in a rook's life-history which corresponds to the "long-clothes" period of human babyhood—the mother alone feeds the young ones, taking the food from the father and passing it on, doubly peptonised, to the babies. But when the

voices change into something like a corvine note the rooklings are no longer so humoured. Both parents leave them alone in their nests for an hour at a time, and they have to take their food from the father direct, as well as from the mother, whichever happens to come first. But it is most extraordinary to notice how they accept it from the father without any demonstra-

tion, sometimes in complete silence—just as young blackbirds or thrushes in a nest will accept food from the human hand automatically, as it were, like little slot machines, but without chirping—while every time the mother approaches they lift up their voices in a chorus of jubilation.

PHIL ROBINSON.

(To be continued.)



THE sight of oxen used in any capacity as draught animals is so unusual in England or Scotland that it always suggests a foreign and a primitive state of things. It is associated in our minds with the pictures of Eastern life in

the Child's Bible, with anything rather than nineteenth century England; and yet the bullock as a draught animal is certainly more ubiquitous than any other creature. We are used to thinking of the horse as the draught animal *par excellence*, but it is only our insular and European prejudice that gives us the notion. Even in Europe more agriculture is done with the aid of the ox than of the horse. The latter is reserved for nobler uses—such posts of honour as between the shafts of the Paris *fiacre*. The bullock is the household drudge.

There are many corners of England and Scotland where the ox is still harnessed to THE PLOUGH, the harrow, THE ROLLER, THE FARM CART—all as seen in our illustrations. In Cornwall, in the valleys of the South Downs, away up on Dee-

side, where our photographs were taken, and in many other parts, the use of the bullock has never been altogether superseded by the use of the horse for draught. A while ago we had some pictures of the teams of long-horned black oxen that

plough in the South Downs. There the teams are really organised in pairs or fours, or even sixes. Our present illustrations show a more happy-go-lucky arrangement—sometimes, indeed, a pair of bullocks, but often a horse and bullock, and sometimes, again, a horse and cow. Anything that has the four legs and sufficient bulk will do for a draught animal—that is the useful working theory of the thrifty farmers of Deeside, and they act on it. Some of these draught cattle you may see to be of the polled kind, and no doubt they do for the ploughing as well as another; but there is a country in the world—Mexico (and doubtless the same may be seen in many another land without the writer's knowledge)—where the hornless things would not do for ploughing.



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THE PLOUGH

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THE ROLLER.

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And for this reason, the manner of ploughing in these lands is primitive. The plough itself is primitive, for it consists only of a bent bit of wood; likely enough this was the fashion of the plough in the days when Adam delved and Eve span, before the coming of that bold innovator, Tubal Cain. And the harness is of a simplicity to match the plough, consisting in no more than a pair of ropes tied from the plough at one end

humanitarian. He has an idea that no nation but his own knows how animals ought to be treated. But the way in which the Saxon *drives* his bullocks does not compare very well with the Latin people's way of *leading* them (*conduire*). The stick that the man who goes on in advance of the bullocks has with him is armed, it is true, with a goad at the end; but it is very seldom indeed that you see him use it. As a rule the big

brutes are obedient to a touch, a word, or even a gesture made with the stick. There is no ill-usage about it. There seems to exist a perfect understanding between the intelligences, human and bovine. It cannot be said that this is the rule, though it is an exceptional case that we do see now and then, with the Briton's treatment of his bullock or even of his horse.

The objections that apply to the use of the milch cow as an animal of draught are obvious enough—it is asking the poor beast to burn the candle at both ends, so to say—but they do not apply in anything like the same degree to the use of the heifer. And the kine are so docile that they can be used as heifers quite safely. In theory it ought to be bad for their use as milch cows later, but we cannot see that it has any practical bad effect. Of course their overwork must be bad at any time of life, and in their youth especially, though it

seems as if the young bovine thing might be worked without injury at a younger age than the equine can safely be asked to work. The truth, no doubt, is that the more phlegmatic ox works at much less expense to himself than the eager, nervous horse, though the latter will do more work. But he costs more, too, in the keep; so that for the money spent you get absolutely more work from the kine, though their work takes longer in the doing. And this, again, means that the man who is superintending the work has to be paid more days' wages. There is a deal of reckoning of *pros* and *cons* to be done before you get the equation solved. But as a rule the British farmer does not stop to do the equation.



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THE FARM CART.

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to the oxen's horns at the other. Thus the plough is drawn while the Mexican guides it. But it would puzzle the poor Mexican to find *points d'appui* for his plough-ropes on a polled ox. The British ploughing Ox IN ITS HARNESS is a much more fully caparisoned beast.

The principal disadvantage at which the bullock team stands to the horse team for ploughing is that it ploughs so slowly—more or less like the “mills of God.” And they say in parts of England where the bullock-ploughing teams are much used that it is a bad education for a man to be using them, because he falls, of natural necessity, into the slow step of the kine, and can never get out of it again, even though his future fate make him a ploughman with a horse team. He will soon lead his team to go as slowly as himself and his former team of bullocks. If this is so, what must be the demoralising effect of the ox on the horse with whom he is put into DOUBLE HARNESS? “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” The nobler quadruped will soon find his paces subdued to the “rolling and feet-trailing gait,” according to the stock Homeric epithets, of the ignoble kine. Is there not even a Scriptural injunction against harnessing these unequal yoke-fellows? Still necessity, on Deeside, knows no law. Those great sweeping undulations of good arable land must be cultivated, and we are a conservative people, a people of the fiercest Tory principles (although we vote and believe ourselves enlightened friends of progress and rabid Radicals), so that the steam plough, which ought to be responsible for all this agriculture, is still a long way off the greater part of it.

Such slow useful work as the ox will do he will do very consistently, and day after day, seldom sick or sorry. He will do his work in the tropics just as kindly as here on Deeside, or a deal further north again. He will work in defiance of various ill-conditions that a horse will not face, and is of a sureness of foot that only the cloven-hoofed creatures have. On the precipitously steep streets and treacherous cobble-stones of Funchal, in Madeira, he will climb up and down, with the heavy sledges behind him, quite regardless of gradients, and is as docile as a performing horse in a circus.

The Briton is a little too apt to take to himself credit as a



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OX IN ITS HARNESS.

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He does his work with the means available, and if things do not turn out well he curses fate and begins again. That is always the secret of his ultimate success—he begins again with an obstinacy in denying defeat that is, in itself, rather bovine. Of the faculty of the American for human-wages-saving in this regard the writer noticed an instance worth remarking in Arizona. The price of human labour is heavy there, and worth the saving, and the ingenuity of the Americans is remarkable.

But the instance was simple enough. Two great waggons, which had brought ore down from the mines to the dépôt—that is to say the station—were just starting back again with their great ox teams. To each waggon were nine pairs of oxen, and of course the almost empty waggons were a light load—nothing in comparison with the weight that the bullocks had drawn down, though all the gradients would be against them on the return journey. So the drivers, instead of hitching nine yoke of oxen to each waggon, had tied the two waggons head to tail, and harnessed the whole eighteen yoke to the leading waggon. In this way, on the little used roads, that are practically no roads, of that country, the work of one man only was required to lead this entire arrangement of eighteen oxen and two waggons up the mountains. It was simple, it was ingenious—it was American. We do not pay so highly as they for our human labour, but still it is a point with us to save labour as we can.



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DOUBLE HARNESS.

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happily placed. When a severe winter is anticipated it is wise to cover the crowns with dry litter, or bend over the large leaves, but in ordinary seasons this protection is needless. Gunneras delight in a warm deep soil and sunshine, not forgetting that shelter is essential, for the reason that in exposed wind-swept places the leaves get sadly torn and injured by storms or strong breezes. In planting provide a good depth of soil by making a hole not less than 4ft. deep, well drained, and the filled up with a soil composed of good fibrous loam and well-decayed manure. Copious waterings should be given during the summer; indeed, the Gunneras, *G. manicata* in particular, never seem quite happy unless they have their toes, so to say, in the water. To plant them in water is a mistake, but rich growth is obtained in moist ground only, provided it is not stagnant.

THE ACANTHUS AND OTHER PLANTS.

The leaf of the Acanthus is as handsome as any foliage prized in the hot-house, yet the plant is rarely seen in gardens. It should be placed on the outskirts of the lawn, or associated with sub-tropicals, the plant when in full bloom making an imposing display. The tall stout spikes are lined with brownish flowers. For its leaf alone the Acanthus is worth consideration, and it makes quick growth in warm soils and sunny positions. Anything approaching stagnation is fatal. There are several kinds, the finest, perhaps, *A. Mollis lusitanicus*, but all are beautiful in their several degrees. To the list of bold-leaved plants may be added the Agave, Plume Poppy (*Bocconia cordata*), Canna, Cannabis, Crambe, Ferdinanda, Funkia, Hedychium or Garland-flower, which requires protection in winter, and should be lifted each autumn, when the flowers are spoilt by the frost unless the climate is very favourable; *Heracleum* (Giant Parsnip), *Megaseas*, *Pawlownia*, *Polygonum*, *Rheum*, *Ricinus* (Castor-oil), and *Wigandia*. All these have bold foliage, and are worth grouping on this account alone.

VIOLETS FOR WINTER FLOWERING.

This is a seasonable time to plant Violets in the open for transferring to the frame in September next. Double Violets are very precious during the winter months, and none is more useful and easier to manage than the fragrant Marie Louise. If one has a frameful or two of this in the garden, the plants will supply quantities of the big double blooms for many weeks during a season when they are keenly appreciated. Plant out now strong runners from vigorous tufts absolutely free from disease, choosing for the bed soil that has been well dug and enriched with thoroughly-decayed manure, wood-ashes, and some leaf-mould. If the soil has not yet been prepared, do it at once, and wait a few days before planting so that it may settle down. Plant out the runners about 1ft. apart in rows, and if they are very strong they may be put about this distance from each other. During the summer months little attention is required. Moisture is essential. Many growers fail through permitting the plants to remain dust-dry in hot weather, and the result is an attack of red spider from which they never recover. When the summer is very hot, a mulch of well-rotted manure will be helpful, and a few applications of weak liquid manure will prove of great assistance in strengthening the roots. Keep all runners and buds picked off until the plants are transferred to the frame in September.

THE COLD SPRING.

At the time of writing the weather is cold and wet, and gives no signs of a change to warmth or sunshine such as we may reasonably expect before April has gone. Seedlings in the garden, and plants put in early in March, have had a sorry time. They must be assisted as much as possible when the weather changes by keeping the soil about them well stirred, watching for insect pests, and mulching any valuable perennial that has suffered from the treacherous spring with its sharp frosts and heavy rains. Fortunate are those who did not prune their Roses early, or sow their seeds either, and where seed has been sown but failed to germinate, make another sowing. Probably the first rotted, or the seedlings were unable to brave the trials of the curiously unseasonable weather. Everything in the garden seems to wear a pinched-up expression, which can only be remedied by helping the plants with mulching and liquid manure early in the summer. Whilst cold winds and rains prevail manurial dressings are scarcely advisable.



IN THE GARDEN

GARDENS OLD AND NEW.

WE often hear from readers of COUNTRY LIFE that the illustrations in our series "Gardens Old and New" are quite a revelation of unknown beauties to them; and while the Editor has a long list of such gardens which he has permission to photograph, he would appreciate suggestions for any others of which his correspondents have personal knowledge. It would be of assistance in making a selection if, in sending lists, rough photographs of the gardens from various points of view could be sent. Also the Editor particularly wishes to say that lavish expenditure is by no means necessary in the creation of gardens of the kind he loves to illustrate.

THE GUNNERA GROUPED UPON THE LAWN.

Beauty of form is necessary in the garden as well as beauty of landscape or flowers naturalised in charming ways. Daffodils bestrewn the grass with golden blossom and Bluebells colouring the woodland are garden pictures of never-failing interest and sweetness, but many phases of plant-life are desirable. The illustration shows the Gunnera boldly grouped for the sake of its ample foliage. This is a plant to place by water-side, on the fringe of the lawn, or any conspicuous position in which its noble massive leaves are not hidden. To cramp such a plant as this would be to destroy its fine outline, and in small gardens the larger-leaved things are for this reason scarcely admissible. The Gunnera reminds one of a large Rhubarb, and there are two kinds, *G. scabra* and *G. manicata*, the former being rather the more imposing. Its leaves will sometimes develop to huge proportions, measuring perhaps as much as 6ft. across, even more in the South of England and Ireland, when the plant is



T Taylor.

GUNNERA SCABRA.

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PLANTS IN ROOMS.

Failure frequently attends the culture of plants in rooms, through either carelessness or injudicious selection. The list of plants that will succeed is by no means short, and those named will remain for years even in health if given reasonable attention. A dry atmosphere is injurious, and another evil is dust, which settles upon the leaves and chokes up the pores. A fairly light position, sponging once a week, and judicious watering are essential to success. Sponge the leaves of those plants with hard surfaces, and therefore able to bear it, with tepid water once a week, and avoid excess of moisture, which frequently results through standing the pots in vases or jardinières from which the surplus water cannot escape. Foliage plants succeed far better in windows than those valuable for their flowers, and the most suitable time for repotting to be done is the present, as at this season new growth is being made, and the plants become established quickly. Never forget that where gas is burnt it is hopeless to expect plants to remain long in a healthy condition. The following will, with careful attention, remain for some years in health in rooms and windows:

FOLIAGE PLANTS.

Aralia Sieboldii.

Aspidistra lurida and its variegated variety, the most useful of all window plants, and they will stand even harsh treatment with impunity. The last-mentioned has striped leafage.

Cordyline australis.

Begonias of various kinds, especially the finely-marked *Rex* varieties.

Dracenas, except the stove kinds.

Ficus elastica, the well-known India-rubber plant.

Ferns of many kinds, especially *Asplenium bulbiferum*, *Pteris tremula*, *P. cretica* and its variety *albo-lineata*, *P. serrulata*, the beautiful Maidenhair (*Adiantum cuneatum*), *Phlebodium aureum*, *Cyrtomium falcatum* and *Onychium japonicum*.

Palms, especially *Kentia*, *Phoenix*, and *Corypha australis*.

Vriesia splendens.

FLOWERING PLANTS.

These are better known, for in the list are *Fuchsias*, Ivy-leaved *Pelargoniums*, the pretty blue and white *Campanula isophylla*, *Begonias*, *Saxifraga Fortunei*, the Scarborough Lily (*Vallota purpurea*), *Himantophyllum miniatum*, and of course bulbous flowers, such as *Daffodils*, *Tulips*, *Snowdrops*, *Chionodoxas*, *Scillas*, and *Hyacinths*. A great variety of succulent plants may be grown, the gorgeous *Phyllocacti* flowering freely in sunny windows.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We are always pleased to assist our readers in matters concerning the garden.

THE CAVES OF ENGEDI;

BEING A

Sequel to Our Siege of Jotapata.

By C. J. CORNISH.

"AND what I say is, that young gentlemen in their position should be promoters o' good, and not inventors o' evil."

This crushing rebuke was the conclusion of a lecture administered by Mr. Peter Trowse, farmer, dairyman, and deacon at the chapel, to the rector, whom he had waylaid on his way back from weekday morning service at the church.

Mr. Trowse was short, grey, and prim, with a pinched-up face, and a stiff little linen cravat with spots like currants on it. His legs were cased in kerseymere, and in his hands he held a spud. The rector was tall, frock-coated, and conciliatory, and in his hands crossed behind his back he held the huge church key, like a modern St. Peter.

Mr. Trowse was a valued parishioner, and his complaints, which had reference to certain cases of loss and damage, caused quite unintentionally by the enterprises of the rector's family, were duly laid before us in the course of that very morning. As his farm and stackyard were a convenient playground for us, we were willing to overlook any slight objections which he might raise to our exploits on his stacks and barn roofs, to which he made us kindly welcome. But in this case we felt he was unreasonable.

His nephew, a blue-eyed, yellow-haired boy, about our own age, and a companion in certain of our enterprises—the less hazardous ones—in and around the village, had been set to "mind the pigs" in a distant beanfield. He alleged this duty as a reason for not joining us in a projected game of "tip and run" on a Saturday afternoon. Ever ready to help a friend, we had unanimously volunteered to join him in his pastoral duties, and "mind" the pigs too. The latter were an unruly lot of some seventy head—big pigs, little pigs, spotted pigs, black pigs, white pigs, and rusty pigs—and all alike possessed by an uncontrollable desire to break out of the beanfield and ravage one of cabbages which adjoined. Tired of the constant excursions and alarms caused by the outbreaks of members of our herd, we had represented to Freddy that the simplest plan was to "keep them moving," as the police do other mischievous crowds, and Freddy, losing sight of the fact that his uncle did not look upon the field as a mere place of exile for the pigs and himself, but as a store of beans for them to fatten on, without trouble to himself, fell in with this notion readily. Providing ourselves with long hazel rods from the hedge, we did keep them moving. At first we merely drove them before us slowly round and round the field in a kind of mournful procession. But as any motion of this kind tends to become accelerated,

and the pigs seemed to invite pursuit by their noise and unruly demeanour, they were "kept moving" much as a ring-master keeps his circus horses going. Urged by our sticks, they dashed round and round the field with ever-increasing velocity, until like a stone parting from a string, the whole body smashed through the hedge and scattered themselves multivivous over the cabbages, and other fields around. The subsequent rounding-up of isolated groups of pigs and their final driving home were not accomplished before sundown, and after much exertion and a good deal of persuading. Exercise, as Mr. Saunders Spencer notes in his work on the pig of the period, is good for these animals; but the object for which they had been sent out for the day, namely, to consume the beans which had fallen from the stooks, was scarcely accomplished. "Them hogs," said Mr. Trowse, "come home right hungry, and their backs was covered with great wheels" (weals). Though we had helped to mind them free gratis for nothing, he expressed himself as far from satisfied, and his feelings found vent in the words with which this history opens.

Small causes often lead to great discoveries, and the reason why I mention the above is that Mr. Trowse's suggestions that we might confine our energies to our own "premises" led to one of the most successful enterprises we had ever undertaken (and we were very enterprising boys), namely, the making of the Caves of Engedi. This was originated in part by that early taste for history which had suggested our memorable siege of Jotapata, described in a previous number of this paper. The rocks of Judah and Palestine had taken a strong hold on our imaginations, and by comparing the adventures of the Jewish fugitives in the caves of Idumæa with the pages of a work called "The Boy Pilgrims," which had fallen into our hands, we had formed the conclusion that the ideal life must be that spent in caves like those in the wilderness of Petra, where we might live like the friendly Bedouins, and dispense to all comers a rude but sufficient hospitality. The fact that there were neither rocks nor caverns in our vicinity did not discourage us.

"The Boy Pilgrims found their caves ready-made," objected the second brother. "They were all used for vaults and sepulchres long before they were any good to live in."

"Well," I demurred, "someone made them first, so we must dig some for ourselves. I daresay it will be years before they are fit to live in, but we can work all our spare time, and on half-holidays we can ask other people to tea and get them to help us."

"There are some vaults ready-made, regular caves, in the churchyard," said the youngest brother. "They buried people in them too. Jeff Curtis, the sexton, said there is one vault anyone could live in, and he has got the key. He says he isn't afraid to go into them—not a mite." He says 'he du'st go anywhere,' that's what he says, and he'll show us the cave. We might learn how to make proper ones, and he has no end of pickaxes and shovels."

"I think we might go and look one day," said Jim. "But we could never dig like Jeff Curtis can; he's had so much practice at making graves, and besides that he's a mason. But we'll start a cavern in the side of the big sand-pit, and mine it properly with crowbars, and make a regular house and fireplace. John Barnardiston is making one now at Windwhistle Hall, in the river bank. He had it big enough to sit in last week, and he's bought a tin saucepan and some potatoes to boil in it, to be ready when he's made his chimney."

The sand-pit might quite well have been a "wady" in the porphyry hills of Petra, so hard and flinty were the sides in which our proposed cavern had to be hollowed. Neither had we adequate tools for the business, for spades were far too large, and would not cut the conglomerate of river flints and compacted sand which confronted us. Nevertheless, after much consideration we hit upon the right implements for the business. We had been much struck by the use which Robinson Crusoe made of "crowbars" when excavating his house. What crowbars really were we knew not, except that shipwrecked sailors always had them ready when they wanted them, just as angry captains always had "handspikes" ready to knock down refractory seamen.

"I've found a whole lot of crowbars," remarked the youngest brother one day, "which are just the things we want. They are all screwed across the windows of the attic and schoolroom upstairs. They were put there to stop us falling out when we were little and couldn't climb out safely or get down by the trellis-work without falling." (These, be it noted, were the normal uses to which we put upstairs windows.) "They have flat ends, where holes are drilled through to screw them on, and if we unscrew them (and I've borrowed a screw-driver), why then you couldn't have better crowbars if you tried."

He was quite right. When we had unscrewed a pair, and tried them, we found them the very things for the business of the hour. They were light iron rods, and easily handled. The flat heads were capital for prising out the flints, and the other ends we heated in the kitchen fire, till they were quite hot and soft, and then, by jamming them down on the hearthstone, we got them flattened into a kind of punch, which was useful for

splitting the stones we could not loosen. We split the hearth-stone in doing this, which was one of the happiest auguries for our success when we were really face to face with the "rock" and making a beginning with the labyrinth of caverns which our excited imagination had already constructed.

When the real work began we found it infinitely harder than the siege of Jotapata, whose annals were recorded in No. 117 of COUNTRY LIFE. We began the entrance on a grand scale, big enough for one of us to walk under without doing more than stoop his head. All the outer faces came off easily enough, and the fallen earth we carted out in tin pails and piled outside in a semi-circle, following the methods of Robinson Crusoe, though without particular reference to his works. Then we got to "bed-rock," so to say, and for many days, I may say almost weeks, we toiled at enlarging our future home, under discouragements that might well have daunted older and more experienced miners. Each big flint had to be worked round with the crowbar, and detached separately from its bed of red, compacted sand. Sometimes the flints had to be smashed *in situ*, and our hands were blistered by the rubbing of the crowbars, and the crowbars polished by the rubbing of our hands. Sparks flew at each stroke from the iron on the flints, and as our cavern grew it was filled with the smell of the sparks of flint and steel. This scene of industry lay near the drive, in a plantation which fringed it, full of wild parsley, snowberry canes, and larch trees—the long drive, known to us always by the local name of the "coach road." This strikes me now as an interesting survival from the time when anyone who *did* drive up to a gentleman's house in Suffolk did it in a coach, not in a dog-cart, or else rode on a horse, for there was no macadam, and the ways were deep in clay. As it was the only means of approach to the house, we made, or rather improved upon, many valuable and interesting acquaintances who passed by, and, like the travellers in "Pilgrim's Progress," stood "leaning on their staves," so to say, and gave us the benefit of their conversation. It was the people who came in the morning who took most interest in us, practical persons of all sorts, going to the house on business, or carrying things to eat, or to sell, who paused to encourage or criticise our enterprise. We carried this out on the temperance system, our only support during a long morning's work being a large brown jug of water and a plate of harvest cakes, which a smiling housemaid used to deposit on the grass for our use at eleven o'clock, "elevenes" being the hour at which we, like other Suffolk workers, required support for the inner boy.

One of our most constant interviewers was Mr. Pilcher, the fish-hawker. His "ride," as he called it, was about thirty miles per diem; but at our village, which was really a little town, he put up his cart, and thrusting his arms through two great baskets, one of "winkles" for the poor people and the other of splendid soles—they were not so dear then as now—for the richer customers, he would step out at double quick time from house to house, always saving a few extra minutes for a visit to ours, where he liked the garden, and often got a chat with the rector, who was partial to Mr. Pilcher, because he was a kind of representative of the sea. We were aware of his bristly face, topped with a rough skin cap above, and set in the folds of a yellow spotted silk muffler below, bending over us as we sat boring into the face of the sand-pit.

"Fare to make ye rarely dry, don't it?" said Mr. Pilcher, nodding in the direction of the jug and cakes.

"Well, we do get rather thirsty. That's why we have the water brought out," we replied.

"Oh, ah," said Mr. Pilcher, "water, is it? Well, I don't mind water—I ha' drunk that afore now; tha's as true as I stand here. Once, for six months, I was as ill, I never drunk nothing but water—water out of a pump," he added, bitterly.

"Will you have some harvest cake, Mr. Pilcher?" we asked.

"No, thank ye, I doubt not, but I'll hev one or their here apples lying on the coach road. I suppose if I hev one o' them nothin' won't be said?"

"Oh, certainly not," we replied, politely, "if you like them. But they aren't very good."

"Maggots?" said Mr. Pilcher, holding one up opposite his face, and examining it critically with one eye shut, to see if there was a hole in it.

"We call them caterpillars," remarked the youngest brother.

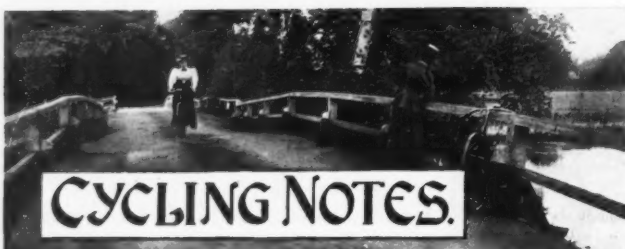
"Not caterpillars," said Mr. Pilcher. "Caterpillars' hops. These here are maggots. But wot is a maggot? It's apples, after all, if it lives in 'em, and they don't si'nify a mite." He ate his apple cheerfully. "Ya'r pa," continued he, "he would give me the best on the tree if he a-know'd I took a fancy for 'em. He aint a mean man. Some is. Now there's Mr. Slater," he continued. "He live ag'in mine. Well, Sir Ed'dard, when he had a rabbit shooting he sent three score to Mr. S—— to give away. So he did; but afore he guv 'em away he flayed 'em, and sold the skins to me." With this parting anecdote, Mr. Pilcher walked up to the house to sell soles, and we saw him no more. Sometimes people helped us, and always they gave us good advice. One day we extracted precious fossils

from the side of the cave; on another day a set of bones—we thought they were wolves' bones, but saved them for Mr. Pilcher, who was knowing in that line, being a bit of a veterinary surgeon; but he gave it as his opinion that they were "dawgs'" bones, which was disappointing. Nevertheless we arranged a museum of the discoveries made in the cave, on boards, for the inspection of our friends passing up the coach road. Besides bones, this contained a fine set of flint and drift fossils, a good many gryphæa shells, which Mr. Pilcher informed us were devil's toe nails, and another which he triumphantly identified as a "fossil spectacle-case." We lived and worked in hourly hopes of finding a mammoth's tusk or an ichthyosaurus, but this gratification was denied to us.

By the time that the cave was so large that we could all three sit in it comfortably, and had made a hole for a fireplace and a chimney, the snow began to fall, and we had thoughts of giving up the life of Arabs of Petra, when Petra was ready, and becoming Arctic explorers wintering on Bear Island instead. But we made, in the language of the present day, a "successful installation" of a fireplace, and were soon in a position to defy the elements. In one of the outhouses were two or three complete firegrates, of a pretty old-fashioned kind with hobs, which had been removed from the house to insert more modern ones. One of these, the least rusty, we painfully cleaned up with sand-paper, and then gave it a coat of blacklead and wheeled it to the cave. Then we fitted it, by the aid of wedges, into one hollow at the back, and nothing was wanting but a chimney-pot to make the fire draw. This there was little difficulty in securing. The rector had a new patent for growing early rhubarb, which was to set up the largest brick-earth drain-pipes on end, and to persuade the rhubarb to grow up straight and spindly in these narrow limits. All we had to do was to take one of these and wedge it tightly into the top of the hole, where it came out through the grass, and puddle it round with clay, for which we had a private pit in the back garden. We then chopped enough kindling in the wood-house to last for a month, and stacked this in a small subsidiary cave where we kept our crowbars.

Does any reader remember the day when he, or she, or both together, first started a house of their own; or recall that delightful day when, after having carpeted it, curtained it, furnished it, and ordered in coals, wood, stores, wine, fruit, and lights, they sat down to eat their first dinner in their own dining-room? They may, or may not, recollect the interest which suddenly invested quite uninteresting things like saucepans, plates, and the whole *batterie de cuisine*, when they had bought and paid for them. All this satisfaction, in an intense degree, accrued to us when we were first able to light a fire and live in the Caves of Engedi. The furniture was seats of wood, which we fitted into the sides, and hollowed out "backs" for in the sand. The curtains were sacks and horse-cloths, with which we hung the entrance sumptuously. The *batterie de cuisine* was two bright new fourpenny tin saucepans and a large Britannia metal spoon. In the larder, for which we had fitted up a shelf, were eggs laid by our own bantams, and potatoes contributed by the cook. We had also salt, which got rather moist with keeping, and a pewter pepper-pot. Nor was illumination wanting. We shut out all the light we could by means of the "curtains," to make the cave more cavernous. And in "niches in the rock" we stuck candle ends, secured by the simple and effective device, known to all boys, of dropping a blot of hot wax on to a stone, and then "dabbing" the base of a candle on to it. We practised lighting fires for some days at home (the rector, having learnt to be rather good at this when a faa at Eton, gave us useful hints), and when the great day came, and our friends were assembled, a select few who would really enjoy the thing and appreciate it on its merits, we were almost trembling with excitement and anxiety.

John Barnardiston, who now lived nearly all his time in a cave he had made in the river bank at Windwhistle, would, we knew, appreciate the frightful difficulties we had overcome, and enter into the spirit of our house-warming. Of the others we were a little doubtful, but they all proved thoroughly in sympathy with the occasion. We had two fires, one inside, which made the cave so hot that we were nearly roasted—but we would have died almost rather than admit this—and one outside, on which we had an extra saucepan and a kettle borrowed from the kitchen, one for potatoes, and the other for tea. We gave our own particular friends seats inside the cave, while several grown-ups, including the now reconciled Mr. Trowse, sat on the trunk of a larch tree which we had undermined and which had fallen across the sand-pit, and drank our tea. The cave fire was so splendidly hot that it melted the soldering of the handle of our new saucepan, which dropped off. But we got the potatoes out with the spoon, and then boiled eggs in it. Everyone appeared to enjoy themselves, and when Mr. Trowse was induced to enter the cave, he expressed himself as "wholly stammed" at the industry we had exhibited. I need not say that Freddy was also of the party, and that thenceforth the regrettable incident with which this story opens was considered to be closed.



IN the *Nineteenth Century* for May a rejoinder is published from Mrs. Ormiston Chant to the philippic of Dr. Arabella Kenealy on "Woman as an Athlete," which appeared in the preceding issue. Mrs. Chant has not much difficulty in disposing of Miss Kenealy's absurd contentions as to the influence of cycling upon the modern woman and the modern baby. "Does it not seem premature," asks Mrs. Chant, "to accuse Clara of 'squandering the potentiality of the race' because she had taken to bicycling, in view of the fact that the first lady's cycle was put on the market by the oldest Coventry firm of cycle-makers so few years ago? When one considers the ages that have elapsed in the evolution of the said race, it is provocative of mirth, to say the least of it, to be told that the recent adoption of one pastime among so many is seriously going to transfer that potentiality to the expended force of a mere handful of women, when their numbers are considered in relation to even the present population of the world." Mrs. Chant brings up plenty of facts in disproof of the hasty generalisations of Miss Kenealy's diatribe, and one must continue to wonder how the latter ever found a place in a soberly-conducted magazine.

The notion of compulsory brakes is not altogether agreeable, because one would much rather let the good sense of cyclists lead them to adopt this necessary equipment universally, and so render any legislation on the subject entirely superfluous. At times, however, one is almost obliged to wish that some pressure could be brought to bear upon the type of cyclist who will not use a brake under any circumstances whatever, greatly to his own disadvantage, and occasionally that of others. A hint was given one day last week to a Birmingham rider at an inquest on an old man with whom he had collided; and though the recommendations of coroners' jurors are far from being uniformly worthy of adoption, in the present instance the advice might reasonably be followed. It appears that the old man who was killed was rather deaf, and did not at first hear the approach of the wheelman, though he whistled and shouted. When the former looked up, however, and saw the machine, he became confused and stepped right in front of it, with the result that he fell on the back of his head, and died a week later. In this case the cyclist was only a lad of fifteen, and when older riders neglect to carry brakes, he is not peculiarly to blame; but the jurors' recommendation that he should put a brake to his machine forthwith was a reasonable one, even though the contributory negligence of the victim enabled them to return a verdict of accidental death.

Short of this propensity, however, of some riders to go brakeless, it must be conceded that the cyclist is usually more sinned against than sinning. For every case which comes before the courts in which a cyclist is the aggressor, there are several in which he is the aggrieved party; and of late this fact has

been peculiarly emphasised. At Dublin, for example, a cyclist was awarded £200 damages in respect of injuries inflicted by a collision with a bread-van which was negligently driven. Another cyclist has just been killed in Belfast, a van being again the vehicle concerned; and though the driver was acquitted of blame in this instance, everyone who is conversant with the conditions of city traffic knows only too well that this type of vehicle deserves immediate extinction.

Country cabmen continue to regard themselves as privileged to drive on whichever side of the road it pleaseth them, and at Bournemouth the other day a local Jehu collided with a lady cyclist and knocked her down. As a matter of fact, he was only four feet from the pavement on the wrong side of the road, and when charged with the offence he airily replied that he had waved his whip to the young lady to cross over to the other side. The fine of ten shillings which was inflicted by the Bournemouth Bench, lenient as it was, should nevertheless render the lives of cyclists a little safer in that locality.

Cyclist baiting continues to be practised in some parts of the country. In the West Riding district, the natives of a certain village have indulged of late in the practice of throwing stones and mud at passing wheelmen, and have even attempted to pull a lady cyclist from her machine. The stone throwing is stated to have been practised to a large extent, and several bicycles have been damaged. In another part of the country, namely, at Godmanchester, a tramp waylaid a lady cyclist, but she was able to escape from his clutches and give information to the police. The local Bench expressed a determination to protect women on the road, and thanked the lady in question for coming forward to prosecute, and it was only by reason of the fact that no previous conviction was known against the defendant that he escaped with a sentence of fourteen days' imprisonment.

Even the harmless necessary cow, it appears, is afflicted at times with a constitutional objection to the cyclist. A professor of music at Spalding was out cycling last week with his wife, near Holbeach, when they met a beast which looked somewhat ferocious, and they dismounted accordingly. Thinking, however, that they were needlessly frightened, they remounted their machines and rode on, whereupon the animal rushed at them violently and tossed the professor. His machine was buckled up, and he was rendered unconscious. The lady fortunately escaped unhurt, and rode for assistance, when it was found that though badly bruised her husband had not sustained any broken bones. It would be interesting to know what steps the owner of this ill-tempered brute had taken to prevent its wandering at will upon the highway.

Every year it becomes a matter of speculation as to the extent to which the Cyclists' Touring Club will retain its colossal membership, and more particularly its hold upon the titled and well-to-do classes. There have not been wanting prophets who have predicted for the present year a rapid falling off of the club's membership from these sources, but an announcement in the current issue of the official organ of the club affords a striking refutation of these predictions. It appears that the excess of membership renewals this year is more than 8,000 over and above that of last year, a fact on which the council of the club have cause to congratulate themselves, especially when it is further considered that new members are being enrolled as rapidly as ever. The May list of candidates is well on towards 3,000, and includes the names of Lord Henry Bentinck, M.P., and Lady Henry Bentinck, Sir J. Bramston, K.C.M.G., Baron Von Lomdeberg, the Hon. R. C. S. Courcy, the Hon. J. Ross, and Archdeacon Meredith, while amongst the applicants for life membership are Lord Iveagh, Sir E. Vincent, and Mr. W. H. Grenfell.

THE PILGRIM.



"Change Alley."

HERE we have another play in which the scenery has the "star" part and the plot is the merest supernumerary. This will not do; the cinematographic style of drama cannot succeed. It is cinematographic in more than the mere shadowiness and unreality of the figures—such plays have also the cinematographic "flicker." "Change Alley" was a series of charming pictures of the period of the South Sea Bubble—that is to say, it was a picture of the manners and customs of the time, nothing more, for the canvas lacked "action."

One deeply regrets the necessity of condemning a play by Messrs. Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson. They write so nicely; there is such feeling and appropriateness in their language; one knows, somehow, that their people are talking as the people of their time would talk. Unfortunately, they talk about nothing; nothing striking or dramatic, that is. The story of the new play at the Garrick Theatre is indeed very feeble. And even then it is merely adumbrated. One is confused by the manner in which nothing is done; oppressed by the tangles of a thread which is in itself of such tenuity that it can hardly be seen.

A young squire who has come into his own after a youth of sea-roystering and roving, falls in love with a country girl. He

dabbles in South Sea stock, loses all his money through a swindler, is saved from ruin by his sweetheart—and there you are. Of course, at its best, there might be a great deal in such a story—if the characters were striking men and women, if the main idea formed the basis of a clever intrigue or an exciting romance. But, at its worst, nothing could be more anæmic. And the story is as bald as our description of it. Why does the young lady leave him in the gay and glittering gardens of Sadler's Wells in the hands of the bold hussies who, much against his will, are overwhelming him with their caresses? Why do these damsels exist at all? They have nothing to do with the story; nothing depends on them; his lady love simply forgives him. Why is the character of Vesta, the daughter of the rascally innkeeper, brought into the case? She cherishes a hopeless passion for our hero, and marries a crusty aristocrat in despair; but why does the head of her beloved rest on her knee after he has been hurt in a duel just when his betrothed appears upon the scene? Why? Nothing eventuates from the episode. In fact, why the duel at all? It leads us nowhere. The piece is all like this—incidents which give no impetus to the plot, and which possess no very stirring qualities in themselves.

There is one dramatic moment in the play; and, though it smacks very considerably of artificiality, we forgive that for the one moment of interest. Of course, when the young Squire tells his friends of his ruin, they would not all turn their

backs on him and keep silent, with bowed heads, while he heaps reproaches upon them, unless they meant to "cut" him, to "rat" from him. But in "Change Alley" they behave for a few minutes like curs, though, all the time, their hearts are of the purest gold. They have no word of comfort for him, they turn away from him; but this is to hide the violence of their beautiful emotion. Directly he has gone, they face about as one man, they hold out their arms with a unanimity which—like that of the gentlemen in "The Critic"—is wonderful, and with one voice acclaim their firm and fixed intention of standing by him and helping him out of his trouble, even though they ruin themselves in the effort. It is not true to life at all; but it is an effective *coup-de-théâtre*, a surprise, and as such was gratefully accepted by the audience longing for something to happen.

Pictorially, the piece was delightful. The old hull of the Fury, transformed, a la Peggotty's hut, into an inn, was full of the spirit of our forefathers. The comical—and lengthy—scene of the dinner—which does not get further than the grace—with its bill of fare literally more than a yard long, was excellent, in spite of the verbosity of the very excellent speech of the hero in praise of money, in which it is conclusively proved that the possession of wealth is only second to the possession of virtue as a means of rendering softer the hard places of the world. The grounds of Sadler's Wells formed another pretty picture; the scene of Change Alley, though unduly cramped and squeezed, was bustling and picturesque enough, and the Dutch garden in the country was truly beautiful. Indeed, nothing was left undone by the management to decorate the play. A company such as is seldom gathered together on one stage was provided for it. Mr. Fred Terry played with extraordinary vigour and valiant vivacity, as the hero—Mr. Terry grows in power and breadth of method with every part he plays. A magnificent piece of character acting by Mr. Murray Carson surprised us and widened considerably our belief in his powers as a player of strongly-marked parts; his old, weather-beaten, hideous, lovable "Hundred-and-One," a sea-salt on whom we could positively see the brine, was one of the recompenses of the evening. Such prominent people as Messrs. John Beauchamp, Eric Lewis, Robert Loraine, James Welch, J. H. Barnes; Mesdames Julia Neilson, Lewis Waller, Geraldine Olliffe, Jessie Ferrar, Lillah McCarthy, and Hall Caine played parts, many of which were the merest sketches. All that was wanting was a drama.

DRAMATIC NOTES.

EXIT "Carnac Sahib," re-enter "Captain Swift." Every manager has one pet ewe-lamb, one play which he knows will always stand by him, one work which can be taken from the shelf times without number, and which will always "see him through." Sir Henry Irving has several, but we will take "The Bells" as an example; Mr. Wyndham has "David Garrick"; Mr. Edward Terry has "Sweet Lavender"; Mr. Hare has "A Pair of Spectacles"; Mr. Penley has "The Private Secretary"; Mr. Carte has "The Mikado"; and Mr. Tree has "Captain Swift." These are constant friends whom nothing can alienate, and whenever any one of our managers is in doubt, he plays one of them.

"Captain Swift" will be admirably played. Mr. Tree repeats his romantic performance of Wilding, Mrs. Tree is the Stella, Mr. Macklin the Gardiner, Mr. Kemble the Mr. Seabrook, while very interesting innovations are the first appearance of Mr. Franklyn McLeay as Marshall, the suspicious servant; of Mrs. Cecil Raleigh, as Lady Staunton; and of Miss Lettice Fairfax, as Mabel.

That very funny old-fashioned farce, "The First Night," as rewritten and edited by Mr. Tree, will form the concluding item in the programme. The public likes nothing better than to see its serious favourites don the motley, and, for a little while, "play the fool." To watch Mr. Tree beating the big drum in the orchestra will give them joy without alloy. "The First Night" is capital fun, and will have the best of treatment. For this, Mr. Compton Courtis, whom we have not seen for some time, will join Her Majesty's company.

It is clearly evident that Mr. Arthur Bourchier intends to take the plunge again, and means to embark once more on the tempestuous waters of management. We were all sorry when he left the Royalty, which he made into such a charming bijou playhouse, and where he was surely building up a capital repertory and a fine "stock company." We now hear on all hands that he is busily acquiring plays from many well-known authors—from that gifted writer, Mr. Herman Merivale, from Mr. Marshall, whose "Broad Road" marked him as one of the coming dramatists, and from Mr. Kinsey Peile, who has done good work in musical plays. The theatre is not yet chosen, and it is a labour of Hercules now to acquire one, so heavy is the demand for them. But it will come in due course, and, this time, it

is to be hoped that Mr. Bourchier will not relinquish his enterprise just as it shows signs of bearing golden fruit. It is not remembered now that, some years ago, before Mr. Alexander took the house, Mr. Bourchier was for a season the manager of the St. James's.

Another new management is also about to be started, when the playhouse can be obtained. That clever and finished actress, Miss Granville, who has played so many characters remarkably well—one of the latest was that of Princess Vendramini, in "The Ambassador," at the St. James's—is shortly to blossom forth as the ruler of a West End theatre. She has acquired a three-act comedy by Mr. Kinsey Peile—who seems to be getting very busy—entitled "An Interrupted Honeymoon"—a promising and appetising name, by the way.

Before these lines are in type, "A Court Scandal" will have removed from the Court to the Garrick, with the original company—except Mr. Allan Aynesworth, who unfortunately is ill, and is replaced by Mr. Vincent Sternroyd. It is a bright and amusing play, and should do well in its more central quarters, though it has been a decided success at the Court Theatre also.

Mr. R. C. Carton's comedy, "Wheels within Wheels" will be before you almost as soon as these lines. It is a comedy, in the real sense of the term, with a serious under-current, although its treatment is light. It tells us of certain infringements—or almost infringements—of the Seventh Commandment, but we know our Carton, and we know there will be nothing in it to offend. There is no ostensible moral attached to it—everything comes right for everyone, and punishment is meted out to none—with one exception. There is a novelty for us in the casting of the play; Miss Lena Ashwell, who is "sympathy" personified, has an unsympathetic part. Clever Miss Compton (Mrs. R. C. Carton) is a flirt and a widow, and Mr. Eric Lewis, Mr. Thalberg, Mr. Arthur Bourchier, Miss Pattie Bell, and Mr. Dion Boucicault compose the attractive cast.

If, as we hope, "Wheels within Wheels" is a big success, it will be worthy of note that the three triumphs of the season are modern comedies, for "The Gay Lord Quex" at the Globe and "The Tyranny of Tears" at the Criterion are dividing playgoing London between them. "The Tyranny of Tears" and "Wheels within Wheels" own this excellent trait in common—they have a serious import beneath all their lightness and brightness. That is as it should be. Great comedies, however brilliant and epigrammatic, to be great comedies, must have a real lesson hidden away somewhere.

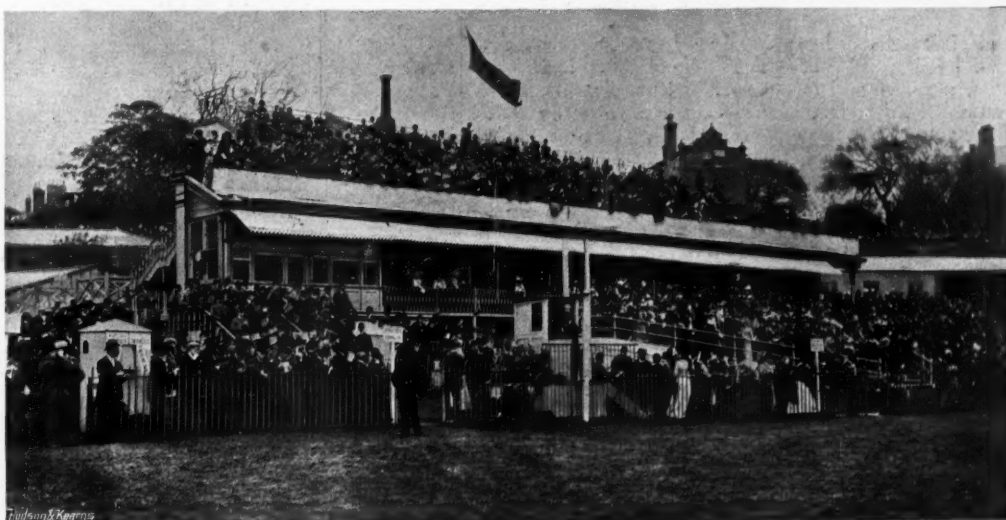
The great question of the hour is, Will Mr. Charles Frohman join hands with Mr. Charles Wyndham at the Criterion? This matter is causing great perturbation, and the Transvaal and Samoa have retired into the background in consequence of the absorbing nature of the problem.

PHŒBUS.



WHAT are the morals to be drawn from this year's Chester Cup? Firstly, that Flying Fox must be every bit as good a three year old as his most enthusiastic admirers have ever declared him to be, seeing that through Batt, whom he beat in the commonest of canterers at even weights in his celebrated home gallop, it is evident that he would have won the Chester Cup with 8st. at least, and probably a good deal more; secondly, that the Chester Race-course is so unlike every other that form on other courses is by no means a reliable guide round the Roodee turns; and thirdly, that although the cup is run for over a distance of two and a-quarter miles, it does not want a real stayer to win it. On their Great Metropolitan Stakes form it looked as if King's Messenger would again beat Northallerton, renamed Uncle Mac, and although, of course, the difference of the weights at which they met at Chester would partly account for his failing to do so, whilst Uncle Mac may have been somewhat fitter last week than he was a fortnight earlier, it is probable that the difference in the two courses also had much to do with the reversal of their Epsom form.

Uncle Mac, 5yrs., 7st. 7lb., 1; Batt, 4yrs., 8st., 2; won by half a length. Such was the result of a race run over two miles and a-quarter at Chester. Suppose the same two horses matched to run the same distance, at the same weights, on the Cesarewitch course at Newmarket, which would you back? I do not suppose it would be Uncle Mac. In fact, it is perfectly certain that that horse—at any rate so long as he was called Northallerton—could never stay two miles in a true-run race. It is true that he was a good



G. Mark Cook.

THE GRAND STAND, CHESTER.

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deal fancied by his connections for the Cesarewitch that Merman won, but I think that Mr. Robert Peck, who knew most about him, was doubtful of his getting the distance, and his suspicions were amply verified when Northallerton was done with at the Bushes. In fact, a mile and a-half is probably his best distance, but he is a horse of nice speed, which would, of course, help him to be well-placed at the Chester turns, so that his jockey was no doubt able to take a nice pull at him in getting round them. With these doubtful stayers this is just what is wanted; what beats them is the long straight-on-end gallop in which they are always on the stretch, with never a chance to take a pull. Batt, on the other hand, got anything but well round the turns, and considering how he was running on at the finish, it was no doubt that which lost him the race.

Of the remainder, Carnatum, a good, honest little mare by Bread Knife out of Carnation, ran well, and finished third, after making most of the running the last time round; and although she is hardly class enough to win a handicap of this importance, she will be worth following in races where the company is not quite so good. Jaquemart looked well, as did the handsome little Dinna Forget, but they were burdened, the first with 9st., and the second with 8st. 13lb., and the pace was all against the heavy-weights. Galashiels, who was ridden by Sloan, and started a red-hot favourite, was always amongst the leaders, but he never looked like winning, and I am afraid he is too soft to ever be a credit to his distinguished parentage (Galopin and Thebais). No worse course could probably be found for such a lengthy, long-striding mare as Winsome Charteris, but she is such a good sort, and stays so well, that she is sure to do better over courses that suit her, and we shall very likely see her in winning form at Ascot next month. O Batt I will only add that he is looking so well just now—better than I can remember to have ever before seen him—that I think he is pretty certain to win a good race soon, as also may Carnatum, Winsome Charteris, and King's Messenger, in their respective classes.



Photo.

SOME JUBILEE HORSES ARRIVE.

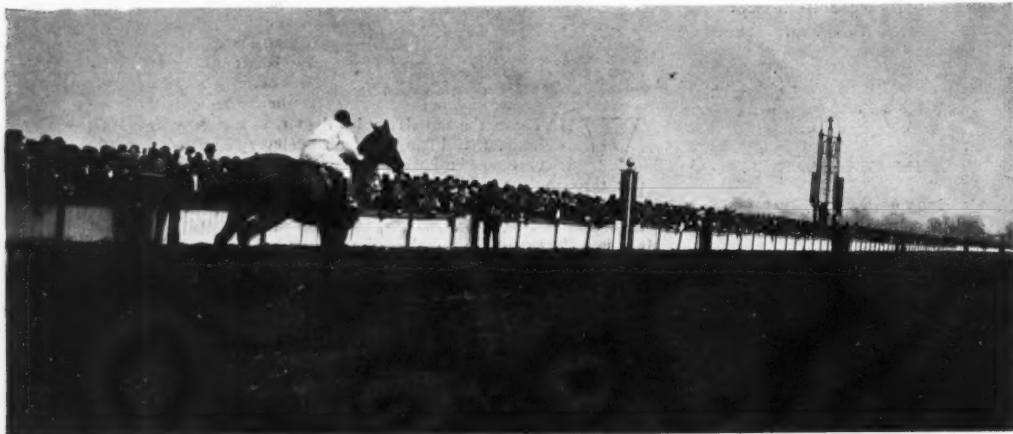
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With the exception of the big handicap, which was, if anything, a more interesting event than usual, it cannot be said that this three days' meeting was characterised by any features more than usually worth remembering. In saying this I ought perhaps to except the Dee Stakes, which exposed the hollowness of Le Blizon's pretensions to be seriously considered as a likely Derby outsider. That this is an exceptionally good-looking colt no one can deny, and as he has shown that he can gallop, I must admit that I was one of those who thought that he might get a place at Epsom, in such a bad year as the present one. As Trident, however, gave him 10lb. and lost him in the Dee Stakes, I conclude that he need not be thought of any longer in connection with classic races. That he will win a good handicap some day is extremely probable. That Trident can stay a mile and a-half in a fast-run race is, I believe, doubtful, but he is of such superior class to most of those who opposed him in this race, that he had no difficulty in going to the front halfway up the straight, and winning

by three lengths from Matoppo, to whom he was giving 17lb. Class will tell, no doubt, but I should have expected Le Blizon to beat the rest, even if he failed to lower Trident's colours at 10lb.; and unless his inability to do so can be satisfactorily explained, he cannot be so good a colt as he was thought to be.

The two most interesting events of the meeting for juveniles were the Mostyn Two Year Old Plate on Tuesday, and the Badminton Two Year Old Plate on Wednesday, in the first of which Cracko was beaten out of a place, while he re-established his reputation by winning the second in a canter. In Tuesday's race, in which he was carrying 9st. 6lb., he was trying to concede 13lb. to the well-tried Chevening, who started favourite, so that it is no wonder that he failed to win. He was also giving 9lb. to Ardeer, and as he too finished in the rack he cannot be anything like so good a youngster as we were told that he is. The favourite only got home by the shortest of heads from O'Donovan Rossa, with Tinsome third, and the form is probably moderate. On the following day Mr. Leopold de Rothschild's colt was again pulled out for the Badminton Two Year Old Plate, in which he was asked to give 17lb. to Aysgarth, and 14lb. to Ravenswing. Seven to four was the best price obtainable about the last-named, who started favourite, but in the race could only finish last of the three, and Cracko, making all the running, won in a canter by a length and a-half. I doubt if we have seen anything like a good two year old this season as yet.

The Royal Two Year Old Plate of 3,000 sovs., which was the principal event on Friday's card at Kempton Park, brought out a more than usually promising field of juveniles, some of whom will be heard of again, if I am not mistaken. That the winner settled all opposition with the greatest ease was evident, and if she has not the size and substance of some of those who finished behind her, nevertheless is she a nice racing-like filly, and one, moreover, who had been so well tried that her connections thought



W. A. Rouch.

TOD SLOAN DELIGHTS THE CROWD.

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Photo.

FIRST QUARTER-MILE OF THE JUBILEE STAKES.

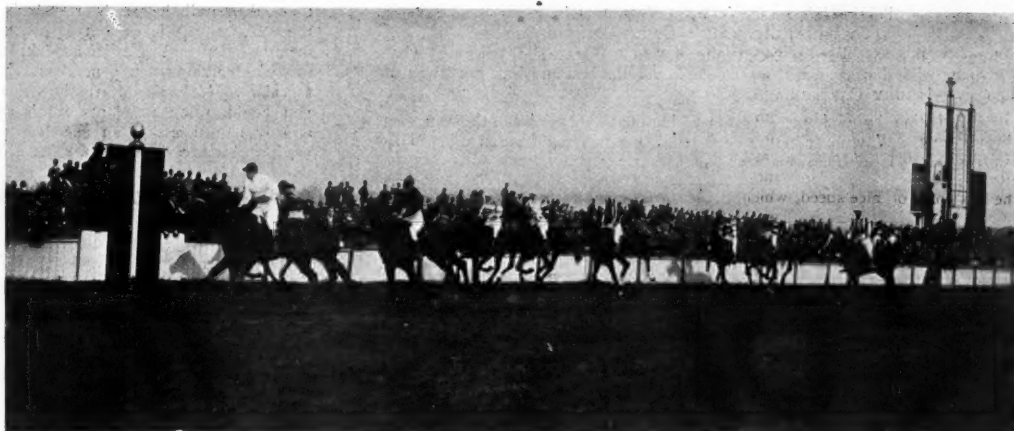
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she could not be beaten; and I hope both her owner, Mr. Russel, and her excellent trainer, Mr. J. Waugh, won a nice stake over her. This was Emotion, a brown daughter of the expatriated Nunthorpe, and Emita, by Galopin, and as she won her race the moment she was asked, and without giving any of her opponents a chance, she is evidently useful.

It was a pleasure to see the handsomest horse in the world, and one of the speediest as well, Kilcock, win the Stewards' Handicap quite in his old style, and his ready victory had the effect of causing his stable companion, Kendal Boy, to be backed for the Jubilee Stakes. I thought the aged son of Kilwarlin and Bonnie Morn, who is in my opinion the truest-made race-horse I ever saw, looked better than he ever did last year, and in spite of his increasing years he will probably go on winning, so long as he is kept to his own distance and is not over-crushed with weight.

Not only were we given a really good race in the big two year old event of the afternoon, but the card also contained another "plum" in the Kempton Park May Handicap. It is a curious thing how all recent running has tended to enhance Flying Fox's form. Princess Mary's running in the One Thousand Guineas, Batt's bold show at Chester, and Trident's Dee Stakes victory have all done so, and now we have Calveley's second to Tarbolton in the Kempton Park May Handicap. As everyone knows, this horse, receiving 21lb. from Flying Fox, finished streets behind him in their home gallop, since which he has not only beaten the Lincoln Handicap winner, General Peace, at Sandown Park, but at Kempton last week ran Tarbolton to a couple of lengths, giving him a year and 17lb., and also finished well in front of such useful handicappers as Neish, Barford, Grodno, Morning Dew, Laughing Girl, and others, to all of whom he was conceding weight.

Thanks to the apathy of the Jockey Club, and the vicious methods of



W. A. Rouch.

FINISH OF THE JUBILEE STAKES.

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went to the post in better form either. Whatever chance the Waler may have had, however, was destroyed by nearly 40min. of false starts. The longer a horse has a weight on his back the more it tells, naturally, and the system of long delays and false starts which, thanks to the Jockey Club, is the most prominent feature of racing in this benighted country, makes all attempts to handicap horses fairly ridiculous, and renders racing generally an uninteresting burlesque. As things were on Saturday last, the long delay and the repeated false starts were all against Newhaven from a mere weight point of view, whilst they may have upset his temper as well; so that, although he was running on at the finish, he never once looked dangerous. His fellow-countryman, Survivor, is a great, good-looking horse, and was generally admired as he cantered down first to the post, but he too never looked like winning, nor did Tom Cringle; and, as these were the first three in the City and Suburban, whereas Knight of the Thistle, Lord Edward II., and Nun Nicer, who finished first, third, and fourth at Kempton, were all in the first four at Lincoln, we can only come to the conclusion that the form of that handicap was better than that of the Epsom event. It must be remembered, however, that the Epsom course is very unlike those at Lincoln and Kempton, and that the City and Suburban distance is a quarter of a mile further than the Lincoln Handicap and the Jubilee Stakes. Of the remainder of last Saturday's field, the Lincoln Handicap fourth ran well, and again occupied the same place; whilst Sirenia looked dangerous for a few srides just below the distance. Thanks to the starting trouble, the form of this race was probably none too reliable, and I think no worse of the top-weight for his defeat under such circumstances, whilst of the remainder I fancy that Nun Nicer, Tom Cringle, and Lord Edward II. may all win races before the season is much older.

As to the breeding of the principal winners of the week, the Blacklock and Birdcatcher lines have as usual been again in the ascendant. Chevening, who won the Mostyn Two Year Old Plate at Chester, is by Orion, son of Bend Or, out of Simena, by St. Simon from Flying Footstep, by Doncaster. He is therefore inbred to Stockwell (Birdcatcher) and Galopin (Blacklock), with crosses of Touchstone and Toxophilite, through his paternal grandam Shotover, whilst he also goes back on his dam's side to Feronia, by Thormanby out of Woodbine, who belonged to the stout No. 19 family. The Chester Cup winner, Uncle Mac, is also stoutly bred, being by Hagioscope, son of Speculum, by Vedette (Blacklock), and Sophia, by Macaroni out of Zelig, by Stockwell; whilst his dam, Matilda, being by Beauclerc, not only brings in a stout strain of Beadsman, but gives back Hagioscope his Blacklock blood through Bonnie Bell, by Voltigeur out of Queen Mary. The Jubilee Stakes winner, Knight of the Thistle, of course goes straight back to Blacklock through his sire, Rosebery, with which he combines the Beadsman blood through his dam, the Empress Maud, by Beauclerc. He belongs to the No. 5 family.

OUTPOST.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TYPES OF POLO PONIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—Your correspondent, "T. F. D.," includes some excellent observations in his letter to you, and describes many very necessary points that are to be sought for in the polo pony, but I must disagree with him in his suggestion that the diversity of types at Dublin was rather apparent than real. Of course, I am aware that it is rarely that two persons can regard the same object with an identical appreciation of its merits, and hence no doubt the differences of opinion which are so frequently expressed upon the decisions of horse show judges; but even having made this admission, I cannot accept the suggestion that the type of pony exhibited at Dublin was level. I am not aware whether your correspondent was at Ball's Bridge on the judging day, and if he was not, it would be unfair to refer to the failings of any particular animal at so late a date. Still "T. F. D." can scarcely contend that a long-backed, slack-jointed pony is of the same type as a short-backed one, or as well fitted for a polo player. Then, too, there were one or two decidedly harness ponies in the classes, and these surely are different from a half-bred Arab that competed against them. I am quite prepared to admit that in the polo pony it is very often a case of handsome as handsome does, but if there are classes for these ponies at shows the sooner one recognised type is selected the better it will be in my opinion, unless the polo pony is to be condemned to be forever regarded as a composite animal like the hunter. We all know that the majority of hunter men express the utmost horror of breeding their horses from anything but clean-bred sires, and hence the lottery that exists in hunter breeding. If polo pony breeders follow suit, the same difficulty will always present itself to raisers of this class of stock, for the fixing of a type will become impossible. At the same time, there is no good end that I can see to be served by closing one's eyes to differences of type when they exist; and as the late Dublin Show was the occasion of the first appearance of the polo pony at Ball's Bridge, I considered it my duty to allude to the divergencies of type.—YOUR REPRESENTATIVE AT DUBLIN SHOW.



Rouch. ENTRANCE TO MEMBERS' LAWN. Copyright.

breeding, rearing, training, and racing in vogue in this country, we do not produce many good horses in old England now—at any rate, in proportion to the number bred. Of the more important events of the present season, an Irish-bred horse has won the Lincoln Handicap, a Yankee ran second for the Two Thousand, whilst the One Thousand went to a filly bred in the same land, and two Walers were first and second for the City and Suburban. It came as a welcome novelty, therefore, to see three English-bred horses placed first, second, and third in the Jubilee Stakes, although, of course, Enthusiast, the sire of Lord Edward II., who finished third, is located in Ireland. In the paddock before the race nothing looked so well as Newhaven II., and nothing

PINIONING OF YOUNG WILD DUCKS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I would feel obliged if you or any of your readers could tell me at what age young wild ducks should be pinioned, and the best and least cruel way of doing it.—HENRY CARRICK.

[Mutilation by pinioning—that is taking off the first joint of the wing—is always cruel. Why not clip the feathers of one wing after the moult? This can be done again the following year.—ED.]

A VETERAN WHIP.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I don't know if the enclosed photograph is any use to you for COUNTRY LIFE; if it is you are welcome to it. It is a snap-shot I took of Bobbie Dowson—who I believe is nearly eighty—at the Sinnington Hunt puppy judging last year. He had that morning walked about a dozen miles over the moors to catch the train at Helmsley for Kirby Moorside, where the Sinnington kennels are, and he walked home from the kennels after the judging was over, which would be fifteen or sixteen miles. I was reminded of the photograph by seeing the enclosed paragraph in a local paper, the *Malton Messenger*.—ED.



SIDNEY HORTON, Hovingham, York.

"On Tuesday the Bilsdale were advertised to meet at Chop Yat at 11.30, and, in consequence of it being announced that Bobbie Dowson would be presented with this testimonial, there were a goodly number present. The morning was anything but pleasant for a ceremony of this sort, but it did not seem to affect Mr. Horsfall, who, bare-headed on his grey cob, made the presentation to Bobbie, with the following remarks: 'Bobbie Dowson, it is a pleasure to me to have to present to you this purse, containing £60 9s., subscribed by many of your friends, neighbours, and admirers, in recognition of your services as whip to the Bilsdale Hounds over a period of sixty years without any remuneration. We are all sorry to think that old age is creeping upon you and you are no longer able to undertake the duties of whip, but we hope that the amount contained in the purse will be the means of keeping you in comfort, however, for a time, and when that is done we shall endeavour to find you some more.' The purse was then handed over to Bobbie, who replied in a very characteristic and broad Yorkshire speech, as follows: 'Mr. Horsfall, I am very much obliged to you, sir, and all them what subscribed for this handsome purse and its contents. Ha sall be a gentleman yance agean, and ha whop te hunt as hard as iver if ha nobbet could get a galloway, that didn't stop at iverrything he met.'"

DESTRUCTION OF PRIMROSES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In answer to "Puzzled" in your "Correspondence" of April 29th, I beg to say that the mischief to the primroses, etc., is done by the sparrows; it is the same every year with mine, and next year I shall try webbing the p'an's as I do young seedlings. It is said that a small insect haunts the primrose blossom which the sparrow likes, and for that reason nips off the flower, but I cannot vouch for the truth of this.—HENRIETTA J. C. BENTINCK.

[We fear the sparrow is responsible for much mischief in the way complained of, but insects, too, destroy primrose flowers. It seems that the rich orange bunch-flowered primroses are left alone more than any others.—ED.]

NAMES OF SPECIMEN PLANTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be obliged if you would tell me the names of the enclosed three specimens in an early number of COUNTRY LIFE. No. 1 is a diminutive plant of the primrose order, or similar plant, and blooms early in the spring. No. 2. Is this what is commonly called "Fire-bush," *Embothrium coccineum*? It is not common in this neighbourhood. It is well grown in my garden—a beautiful bush, now a mass of bloom. No. 3: This is trained against a wooden wall or partition, but is stout stemmed, almost like a shrub or tree, blooms freely each spring, and has a thick leafy growth later. Uncommon here (Norwich). It is slightly protected by an angle of two walls, but otherwise no care is taken specially of it. It is now in full bud.—A.

[1. As far as we can judge from very withered flowers it is the cowslip, *Primula veris*. 2. No, not the Fire-bush, which is an entirely different plant, but the beautiful *Berberis Darwini*. 3. *Piptanthus nepalensis*, or, to give the popular name, Nepal laburnum.—ED.]

NITRATE OF POTASH AND PHOSPHATE OF SODA AS INSECTICIDES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—On a stray piece of newspaper—name torn off—I saw that common saltpetre—nitrate of potash—and phosphate of soda mixed, and a small pinch sprinkled on the soil of the pot, quickly shows an improvement in nearly all plants. Would it injure Malmaisons that have been kept through a winter without heat and want a little help on before planting out? They were young plants. Also would it injure a hard fern, a very handsome one, which is now getting over a very bad attack of scale and making fresh shoots, and should it be used before or after watering?—L. H.

[You will find nitrate of potash—common saltpetre—a very good plant manure mixed with an equal quantity of phosphate of potash, but whilst the quantities should be small, one ounce each to two gallons of water, it is better to apply these manures in this liquid form than in a dry state. We greatly like liquid manure composed of soot, a peck put into a coarse bag, and soaked in ten gallons of water with half a pound of nitrate of soda added. You must, however, give such a stimulant as this very carefully to Malmaison carnations and ferns, otherwise the results will be disastrous, as neither like liquid manures greatly. We advise you to pick off those leaves very badly affected and burn

them, then well cleanse the rest, laying the plant upon its side on a table for the purpose. It is evident it needs cleaning as well as manuring. Liquid manures may be given twice a week, but not strong. Too much feeding is apt to make carnations in general and Malmaisons in particular rather soft and succulent. Malmaison carnations are generally most satisfactory in pots, and you should grow your plants in this way. Soot water alone, in the proportion already named, makes an excellent pot plant manure, but a little variation weekly with occasional rests, using clear water alone, is advisable, as the soil then gets cleansed.—ED.]

ANIMALS AND BIRDS AS PATIENTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Having read the article on "Animals and Birds as Patients" in your interesting paper, I think that some of your readers may perhaps care to hear of my experience as an amateur doctor and surgeon. My hobby being, however, a somewhat dangerous one for an amateur, I confine my art to alleviating the sufferings of dumb animals, and have already effected several successful cures. Three years ago I bought a pure-bred silver-grey Dorking cock. The unfortunate bird, being unaccustomed to its new surroundings, decided to roost on a tree; this met with the severe disapproval of the intelligent poultry-maid, and she shook the tree to disturb the cock. The shaking had its effect, and the bird, being heavy, lost his balance and fell down. As he did not get up, he was picked up, and his left wing was found to be fractured, i.e., the principal bone thereof. I was advised to have the cock killed, but my Æsculapian instincts resented this, and getting several people to hold the bird, I set the bone, and then adjusting both wings close to the cock's body, bandaged them with a plaster of Paris bandage, in such a way that, although the bird was able to breathe freely, he was unable to move his wings. He was then placed in one of Boulton and Paull's dogs' travelling boxes (without a perch), and left there for three weeks in solitary grandeur. He would crow merrily to his hens, who would crowd round their lord's prison and peep between the bars. At the end of three weeks I took off the plaster of plaster bandage and returned the cured bird to the poultry yard, and he is able to fly and fight as if he had never met with such a serious accident.—ROSE KONIGSWARTER, Schloss Kwasney, Austria.



THE St. Andrews medal meetings have made themselves rather notorious for the villainous weather that commonly accompanies them, but this year, though the first days of the meeting were all that was abominable, the actual medal day itself was one of brilliant sunshine, though attended by a shrewdly-nipping wind from the north-east which made accurate play none too easy. But from a general point of view it was a grand and a bracing day, and there might seem some reason for surprise that the majority of the scores were not lower. The truth is, however, that, in addition to the difficulty of the wind, the brilliant sunshine itself was not a little trying, coming as it did after a spell of the grey "dour" days that we are so familiar with in the East Neuk of Fife. This leap into the sunshine after the dark is always rather disconcerting to eyes that have grown more or less used to the twilight. Perhaps it is to this that we may attribute the generally high scoring, while at the same time it is a circumstance that makes Mr. Tait's winning score of 80 all the more creditable. It is a very fine score under the best of circumstances, and one that has seldom been beaten in the competitions of the Royal and Ancient Club. The meeting was the largest that has ever been held at that season of the year, fifty-eight couples taking out cards. None challenged Mr. Tait's score more nearly than Mr. J. E. Laidlay, his old antagonist, with an 84. It is only fair to say that Mr. Laidlay had the cruellest of luck three holes from home, slightly slicing his ball into that abominable railway that we all know so well, and there getting an absolutely unplayable lie, so that he had to lift and lose two strokes. It is a heinous place, where a lucky man may get a very fairly lying ball, while a worse stroke, that slices the ball over the line and into the field beyond, generally escapes all punishment. This is an anomaly that we believe the authorities of the club have already in their minds to remedy, and the necessity for some change of rule ought to be emphasised by Mr. Laidlay's rather heavy disaster. On the other hand, Mr. Tait himself was not without his slices of evil luck (who can go through a round of eighteen holes without them?), and had he been at all fortunate at the fifteenth and sixteenth holes it is quite likely that he would have broken the previous record, of 78, for the medal competitions. In any case it is generally admitted, even by himself, that in all the many fine games he has played, he has never played a finer than when he won the spring medal of the Royal and Ancient Club for 1899. Honour to the brave!

It is very curious to see the bunkers on the St. Andrews course as they are just now, full of water. It is an added terror to them, for it means a dead loss of a shot if the ball goes in; and the ball has to be dropped behind, and the dread hazard confronted again. "The oldest inhabitant" cannot remember the bunkers in this state at this time of year. They have been so all the winter, and it is eloquent testimony of the amount of rain that must have visited Bonnie Scotland in the last few months.

We see that England and Scotland have been at it again on the links of Porthcawl (what a number of really good seaside links there now are in the Principality of Wales, by the by!), and again with the same result—Vardon and Taylor having the better of Braid and Herd. We do not think these two Scotsmen will ever catch the Englishmen now. They had their best chance when Taylor was still a little under the influenza. Vardon is a tower of strength to give a man confidence. Taylor said of him at Richmond that he ought to be put under the Game Laws, a close time made for him, from March to October, to give the others a chance.